THE BEEKMANS OF NEW YORK

IN POLITICS AND COMMERCE

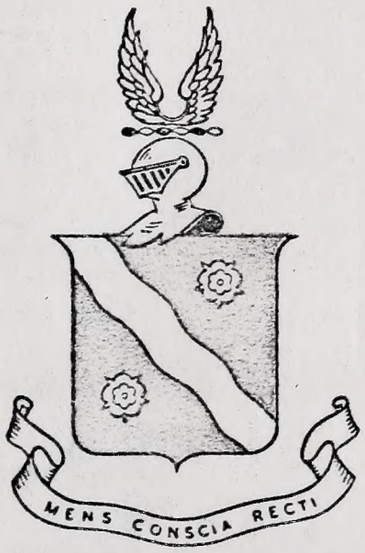
1647-1877

Vol. 1

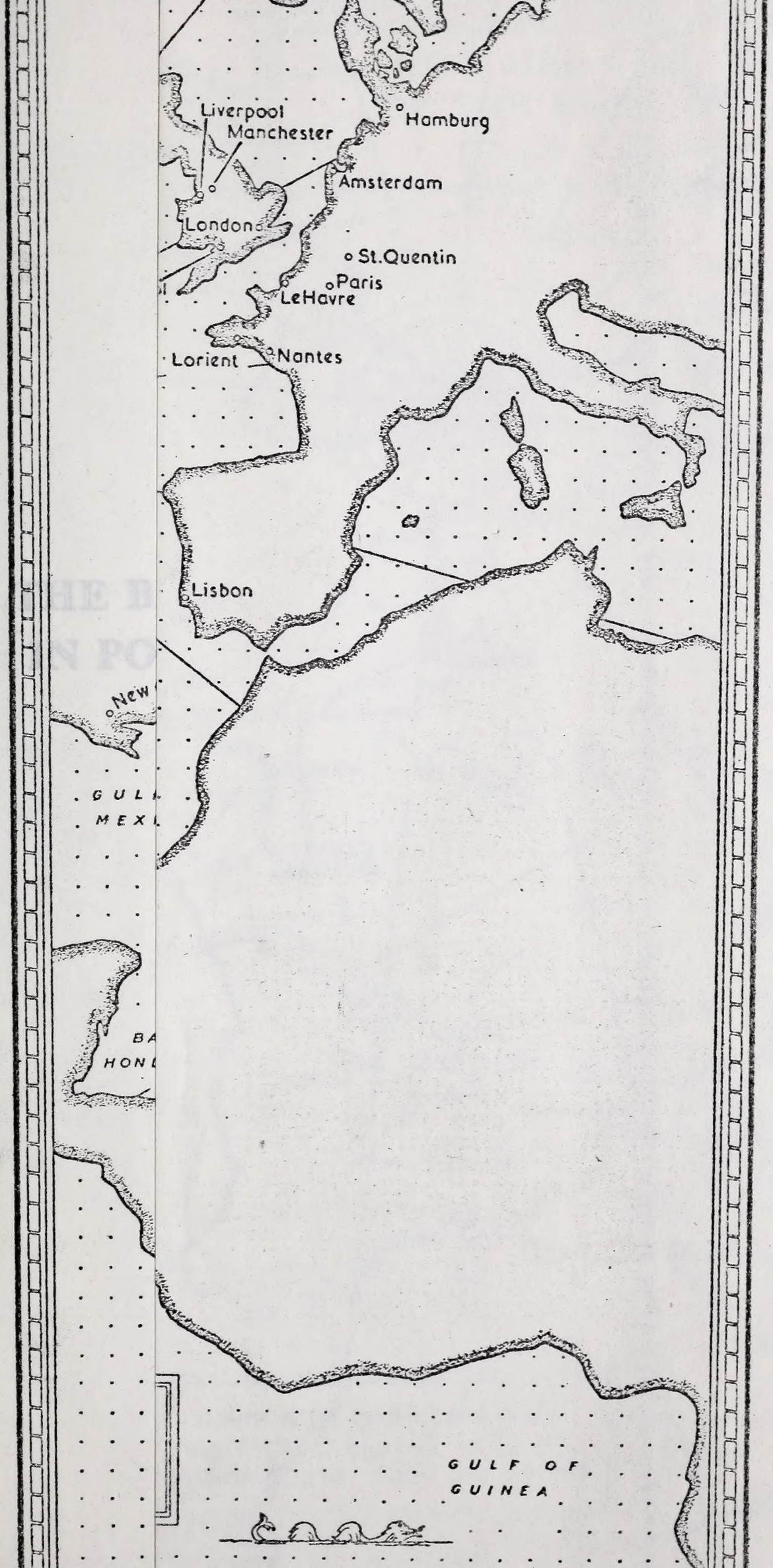
by

PHILIP L. WHITE

with an Introduction by Fenwick Beekman, M.D.



THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
UNDER A GRANT FROM
THE BEEKMAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK 1956


Liverpool
Manchester
Hamburg
Amsterdam
London
St.Quentin
Paris
LeHavre
Lorient
Nantes
Lisbon
New
GULF OF
GUINEA

THE BEEKMANS OF NEW YORK

IN POLITICS AND COMMERCE

1647-1877

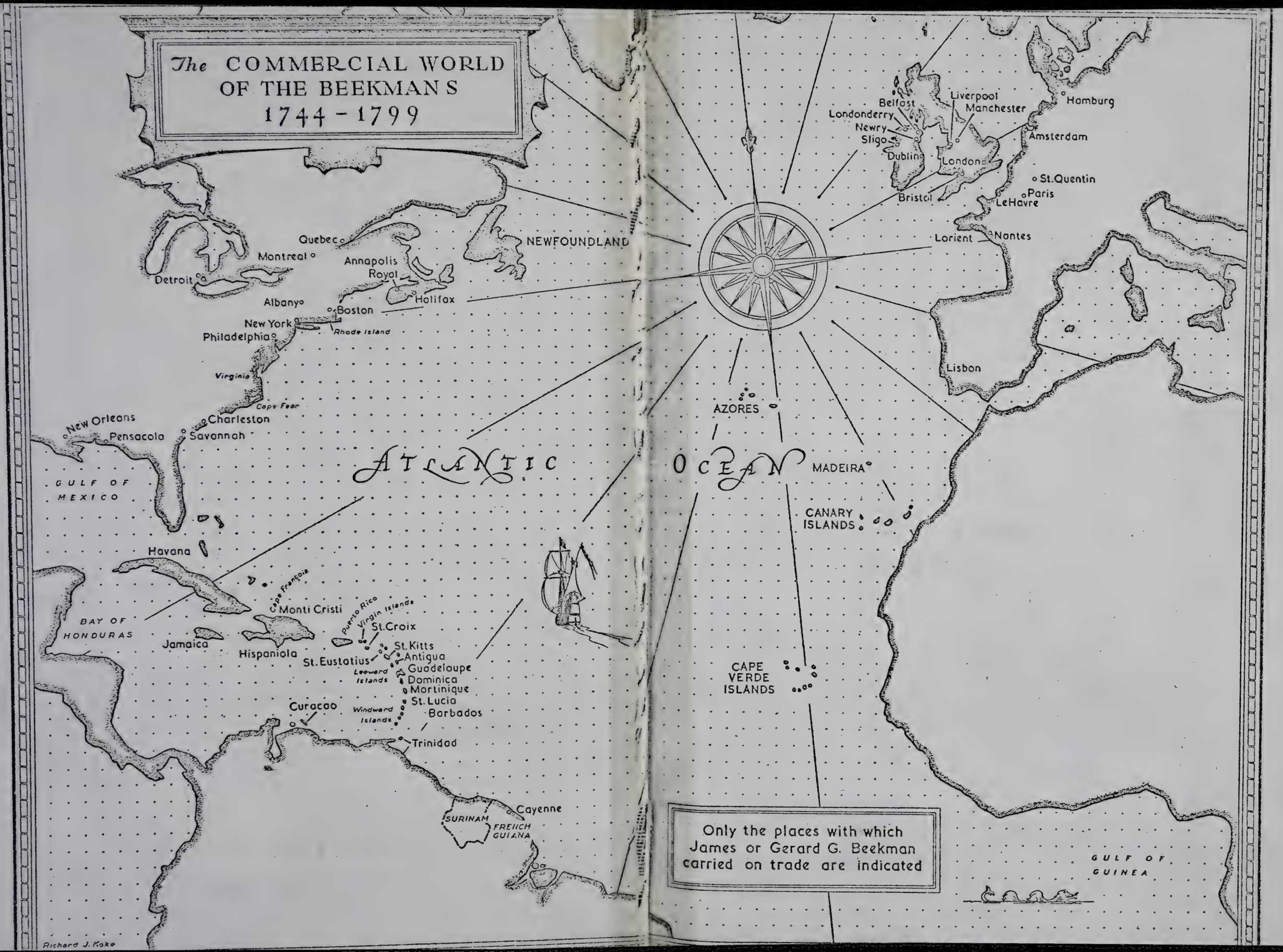
Vol. I

by

PHILIP L. WHITE

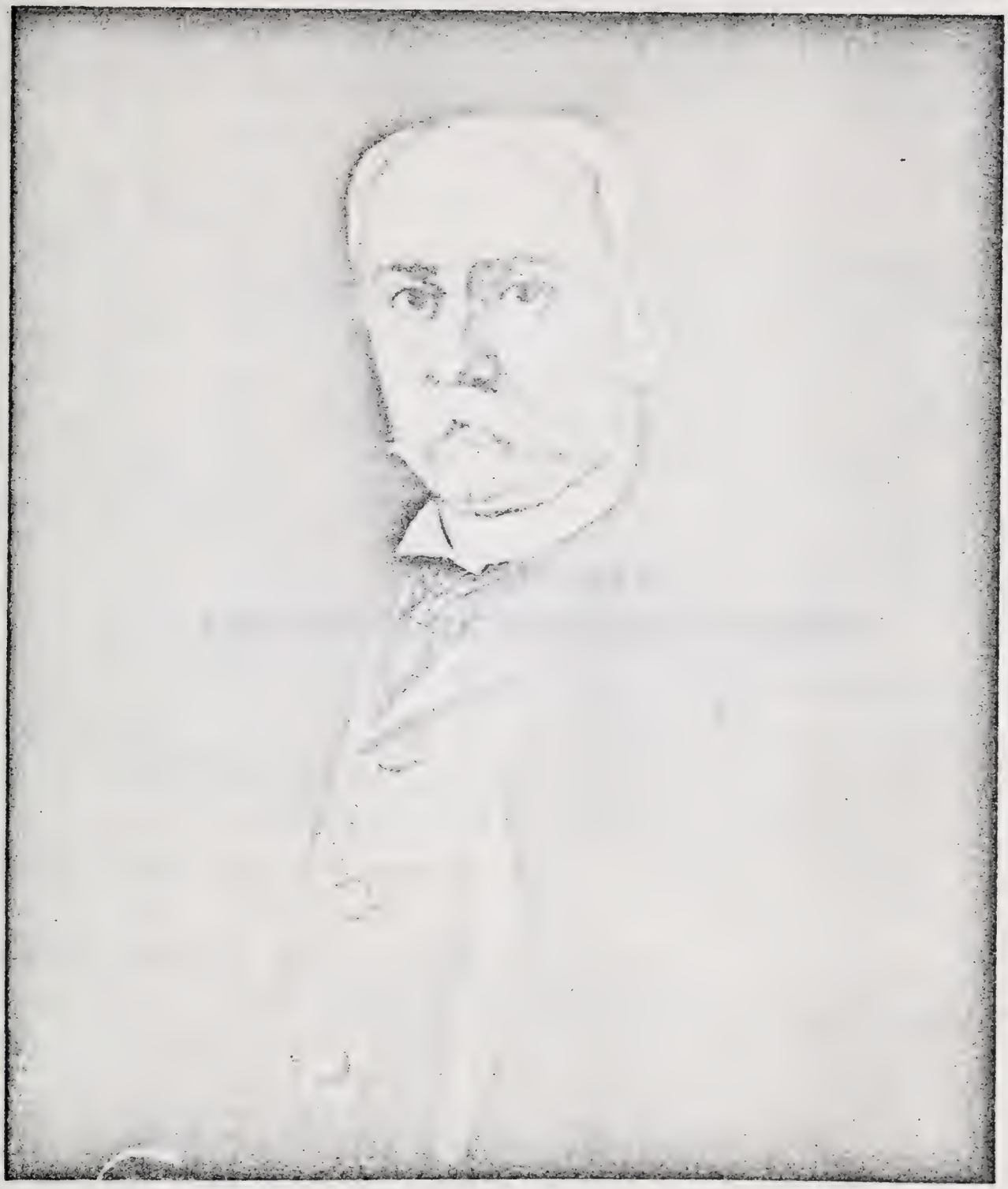
with an Introduction by Fenwick Beekman, M.D.

THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
UNDER A GRANT FROM
THE BEEKMAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK 1954


The COMMERCIAL WORLD OF THE BEEKMANS 1744 - 1799
NEWFOUNDLAND
Quebec
Montreal
Detroit
Annapolis Royal
Halifax
Albany
Boston
New York
Rhode Island
Philadelphia
Virginia
Cape Fear
Charleston
New Orleans
Pensacola
Savannah
GULF OF MEXICO
Havana
Cape Francois
Monti Cristi
Puerto Rico
Virgin Islands
St. Croix
BAY OF HONDURAS
Jamaica
Hispaniola
St. Eustatius
St. Kitts
Antigua
Leeward Islands
Guadeloupe
Dominica
Martinique
St. Lucia
Curacao
Windward Islands
Barbados
Trinidad
Cayenne
SURINAM
FRENCH GUIANA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
AZORES
MADEIRA
CANARY ISLANDS
CAPE VERDE ISLANDS
Belfast
Londonderry
Newry
Sligo
Dublin
Liverpool
Manchester
London
Bristol
Hamburg
Amsterdam
St. Quentin
Paris
LeHavre
Lorient
Nantes
Lisbon
GULF OF GUINEA
Only the places with which James or Gerard G. Beekman carried on trade are indicated
Richard J. Koke

THE BEEKMANS OF NEW YORK IN POLITICS AND COMMERCE 1647-1877

OF THIS BOOK FIVE HUNDRED COPIES HAVE BEEN
PRINTED BY THE WAVERLY PRESS AT BALTIMORE
OF WHICH THIS COPY IS
NUMBER 212



GERARD BEEKMAN (1842–1918)

Founder of The Beekman Family Association

Portrait by Walter Satterlee (1844–1908)

Gift to The New-York Historical Society
from The Beekman Family Association

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE WAVERLY PRESS, INC., BALTIMORE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DEDICATION

THE PUBLICATION of this history of the Beekman family (*The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce, 1647–1877*) was made possible through funds granted to The New-York Historical Society by The Beekman Family Association for research into the large collection of papers pertaining to the Beekman family that are to be found in the library of this Society and into such other manuscript or printed sources as were necessary. In addition to this history, three volumes of transcripts of *The Beekman Mercantile Papers 1746–1799* are also published for the use of historians.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Gerard Beekman (1842–1918), the founder and benefactor of The Beekman Family Association.

PREFACE

THE BEEKMANS, beginning with the Dutch colonist William Beekman in 1647, maintained for more than two centuries a high position among the interrelated families whose ability and wealth made them the aristocracy of New Netherland and New York. As leaders in politics, in commerce, and in philanthropy in its broader sense Beekmans helped to shape the basic institutions of the society in which they lived.

The overall purpose of this book is to trace and evaluate the changing role of the Beekmans as a representative family of New York's old aristocracy. To do this, detailed investigations have been made of the individual accomplishments of outstanding members of the family in each of three periods: The Public Servants, 1647–1758; The Merchants, 1744–1799; The Philanthropist, 1815–1877. In addition to these three sections the book contains a prologue on the European background of the family and an epilogue which attempts to appraise the contributions of the Beekmans to New York's institutional development and to point out the ways in which the role of the family changed in successive generations.

In the first of the three major sections of the book there appear separate studies of the political careers of members of the Beekman family in New Netherland and New York from 1647 to 1758. These accounts are based largely on published sources although unpublished letters in The New-York Historical Society provided important supplementary material on the second Henry Beekman. They demonstrate how members of the Beekman family reacted to various political issues of the Province; they make clear also how the Beekmans aided the development of political institutions which were distinctively American and of an attitude which British officials characterized as one of "independency."

The second of the three major sections describes and analyzes

the careers of the New York merchants Gerard G. Beekman and James Beekman. In the case of Gerard G. Beekman the account is based on one large letterbook (1752–1770), a smaller account book, both of which have long been accessible to scholars at The New-York Historical Society, and on a smaller letterbook (1746–1750) which has not been available until this time. The study of James Beekman's career, which spanned the entire second half of the 18th century, is based principally on account books, one letterbook (1766–1799), and a complete file of incoming correspondence from abroad. None of this material has been available to scholars before. The two studies, supplemented by an analysis of the sparse commercial records (1744–1750) of James Beekman's father, Dr. William Beekman, have provided the basis for generalized conclusions on the conduct of commerce at New York in the three decades before the Revolution. These conclusions are set forth in the last chapter of the section.

The studies of the careers of Gerard G. Beekman and James Beekman are the first intensive analyses to be made of individual mercantile careers in colonial New York. They should be compared to similar works on the Jacksons and the Lees in Massachusetts, the House of Hancock in Boston, the Browns of Providence Plantations, and the Pepperrells of Piscataqua. The author's conclusions on the conduct of business at New York should be compared also with those of Virginia Harrington in her well-known survey of New York business, *The New York Merchant on the Eve of the Revolution*.[1]

The section dealing with the merchants of the Beekman family is designed also to serve as an introduction to the three volumes of *The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746–1799*, which were edited by the author and are to be published simultaneously. These volumes contain the commercial correspondence of Gerard G. Beekman and James Beekman plus the letters of James Beekman's brother, Gerard W. Beekman, to a third brother, William Beekman, in the years 1777–1781. Gerard W.

[1] See note 1 in the author's preface to his edition of *The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746–1799* (3 vols.; New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1956).

Beekman was also a merchant; his letters reflect his efforts to carry on business during his wartime residence in Philadelphia. To assist the user of the published letters as well as the reader of the chapters on the merchants in this volume there are included in the appendix a glossary of eighteenth-century commercial terms,[2] especially those of the textile trade in which James Beekman specialized, and several tables summarizing certain aspects of James Beekman's business. The map of the North Atlantic which constitutes the endpapers of all four volumes locates the various ports with which the Beekmans dealt.

The third section of the book evaluates the character, the political and philanthropic career of James W. Beekman in the middle of the 19th century. This account is based both on published records and on voluminous personal papers which have not been used previously. This is a more intimate study than any of the others. It attempts to portray the personality of a representative gentleman of the old New York aristocracy as well as to set forth and appraise his contributions to his community, especially his efforts for the preservation of the Federal Union, for free public education, for the advancement of higher learning, the improvement of medical services, and the creation of Central Park.

Because the method chosen for presenting the history of the Beekmans excluded from consideration all except the most prominent members of the family, a special Introduction has been provided by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, President of the Beekman Family Association and of The New-York Historical Society. It is designed to fill in some of the gaps, to bring the story down to date, and to afford a general backdrop against which the front-stage actors may be viewed in better perspective. A genealogical chart of the Beekmans of New York is provided with the introduction; it shows the principal branches of the family from the founder through eight generations to the present. The family portraits of which reproductions appear

[2] Users of the Glossary should be sure to take note of the caveats set forth at its beginning.

here are for the most part from the collection in the possession of Dr. Beekman.

The appendix to this volume contains, in addition to the Glossary and the tables summarizing some aspects of James Beekman's business career, both a Bibliographical Note and a Key to Abbreviated Citations.

The analytical index was compiled by David H. Wallace, Assistant Editor of The New-York Historical Society. I am deeply grateful to him for undertaking an arduous task which it was impossible for me to perform. All who have occasion to use the index will join me in expressing gratitude for the thoroughness with which this work was done.

Those who have aided me are many indeed. The deepest of my obligations is to Dr. Beekman. It was he who conceived the project and made it possible for The New-York Historical Society, through a series of yearly grants from The Beekman Family Association, to support the research, the writing, and the publication. For advice and inspiration I am especially indebted to Professors Allan Nevins, Richard B. Morris, and Virginia Harrington. At The New-York Historical Society Dr. R. W. G. Vail, Director, and all of his staff members have aided and encouraged me enormously; in particular the Society's Editor, Charles E. Baker, has counselled me most closely and invaluably. For this assistance and that of many, many others whose names cannot be mentioned I am truly thankful.

Austin, Texas
October 3, 1955

PHILIP L. WHITE

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

Family Portraits and Houses; Maps and Charts

ENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE BEEKMANS OF NEW YORK

1565-

600–1

Mari
23–1

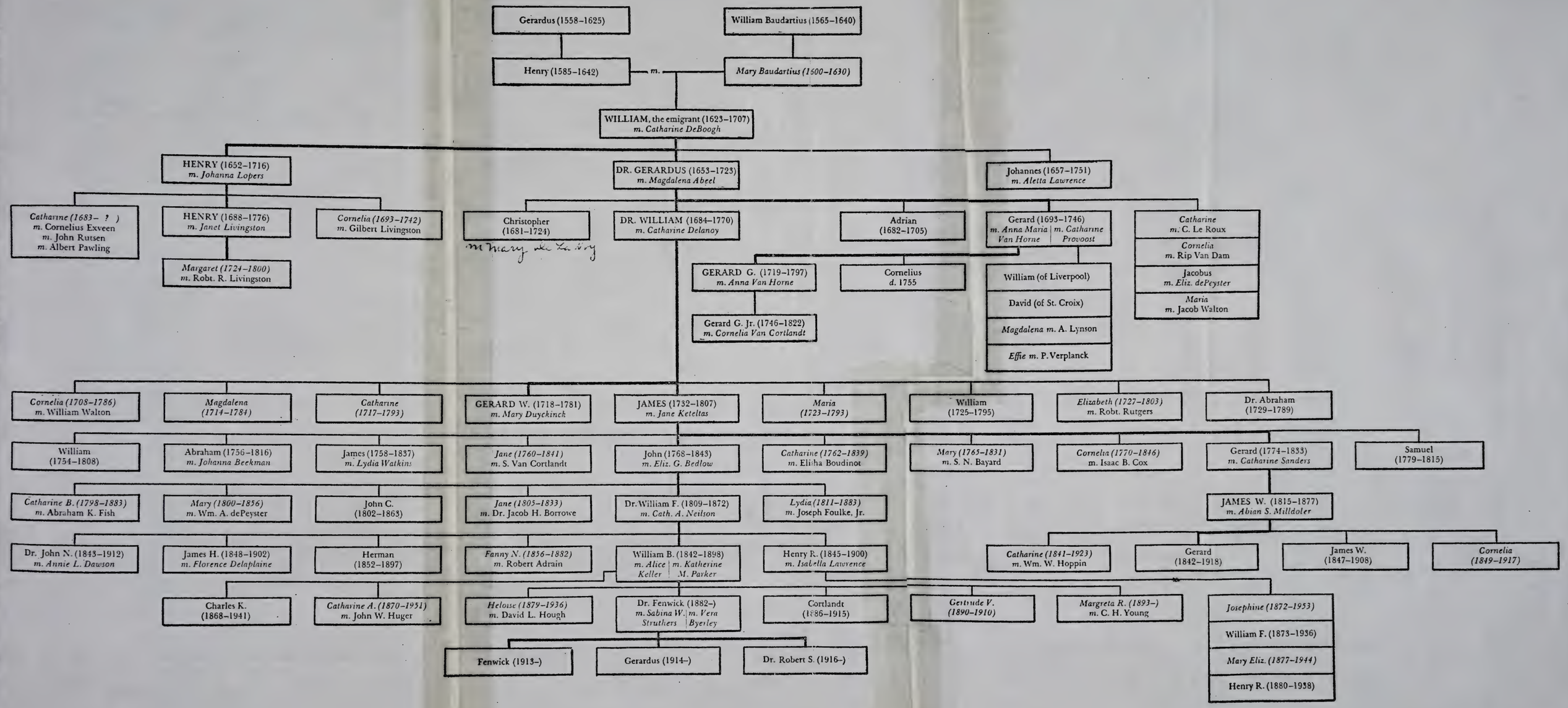
e (17
ha B

(181
ph F

. (18
ella

Cortla
86–1

(19


Gerardus (1558–1625)
William Baudartius (1565–1640)
Henry (1585–1642)
m.
Mary Baudartius (1600–1630)
WILLIAM, the emigrant (1623–1707)
m. Catharine DeBoogh
HENRY (1652–1716)
m. Johanna Lopers
DR. GERARDUS (1653–1723)
m. Magdalena Abeel
Johannes (1657–1751)
m. Aletta Lawrence
Catharine (1683– ?)
m. Cornelius Exveen
m. John Rutsen
m. Albert Pawling
HENRY (1688–1776)
m. Janet Livingston
Cornelia (1693–1742)
m. Gilbert Livingston
Margaret (1724–1800)
m. Robt. R. Livingston
Christopher
(1681–1724)
m Mary de La Ivy
DR. WILLIAM (1684–1770)
m. Catharine Delanoy
Adrian
(1682–1705)
Gerard (1693–1746)
m. Anna Maria Van Horne
m. Catharine Provoost
Catharine
m. C. Le Roux
Cornelia
m. Rip Van Dam
Jacobus
m. Eliz. dePeyster
Maria
m. Jacob Walton
GERARD G. (1719–1797)
m. Anna Van Horne
Cornelius
d. 1755
Gerard G. Jr. (1746–1822)
m. Cornelia Van Cortlandt
William (of Liverpool)
David (of St. Croix)
Magdalena m. A. Lynson
Effie m. P. Verplanck
Cornelia (1708–1786)
m. William Walton
Magdalena
(1714–1784)
Catharine
(1717–1793)
GERARD W. (1718–1781)
m. Mary Duyckinck
JAMES (1732–1807)
m. Jane Keteltas
Maria
(1723–1793)
William
(1725–1795)
Elizabeth (1727–1803)
m. Robt. Rutgers
Dr. Abraham
(1729–1789)
William
(1754–1808)
Abraham (1756–1816)
m. Johanna Beekman
James (1758–1837)
m. Lydia Watkins
Jane (1760–1841)
m. S. Van Cortlandt
John (1768–1843)
m. Eliz. G. Bedlow
Catharine (1762–1839)
m. Elisha Boudinot
Mary (1765–1831)
m. S. N. Bayard
Cornelia (1770–1846)
m. Isaac B. Cox
Gerard (1774–1833)
m. Catharine Sanders
Samuel
(1779–1815)
Catharine B. (1798–1883)
m. Abraham K. Fish
Mary (1800–1856)
m. Wm. A. dePeyster
John C.
(1802–1863)
Jane (1805–1833)
m. Dr. Jacob H. Borrowe
Dr. William F. (1809–1872)
m. Cath. A. Neilson
Lydia (1811–1883)
m. Joseph Foulke, Jr.
JAMES W. (1815–1877)
m. Abian S. Milldoler
Dr. John N. (1843–1912)
m. Annie L. Dawson
James H. (1848–1902)
m. Florence Delaplaine
Herman
(1852–1897)
Fanny N. (1856–1882)
m. Robert Adrain
William B. (1842–1898)
m. Alice Keller
m. Katherine M. Parker
Henry R. (1845–1900)
m. Isabella Lawrence
Catharine (1841–1923)
m. Wm. W. Hoppin
Gerard
(1842–1918)
James W.
(1847–1908)
Cornelia
(1849–1917)
Charles K.
(1868–1941)
Catharine A. (1870–1951)
m. John W. Huger
Heloise (1879–1936)
m. David L. Hough
Dr. Fenwick (1882–)
m. Sabina W. Struthers
m. Vera Byerley
Cortlandt
(1886–1915)
Gertrude V.
(1890–1910)
Margreta R. (1893–)
m. C. H. Young
Josephine (1872–1953)
William F. (1873–1936)
Mary Eliz. (1877–1944)
Henry R. (1880–1938)
Fenwick (1913–)
Gerardus (1914–)
Dr. Robert S. (1916–)

INTRODUCTION

by Fenwick Beekman, M.D.
President of The Beekman Family Association

The author of *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce 1647–1877* has produced a scholarly work, based upon his study of the large collection of original manuscripts which have been deposited for safekeeping in the library of The New-York Historical Society,* together with information obtained from the writings of historians and from the published documents concerning contemporary periods. As may be presumed, this necessitated much investigation and research which has been accomplished in a careful and exhaustive manner for the several subjects treated in this volume. Yet a dearth of factual source material (original manuscripts) covering the careers of many other descendants of the original Wilhelmus Beekman has unfortunately made it impossible to include their lives in this work. As a result, the volume before the reader takes the form of a series of biographical monographs on some of the more important members of the family rather than of a well-rounded historical account of the family as a whole. This is particularly evident for the later generations—a period concerning which but little vouched-for information was obtainable. It seems therefore wise for me to supply a short, informal account of what may be lacking in this excellent and informative work to do with certain well-known members of the family.

Let us commence with the generation of James "the merchant," inasmuch as the author seems to have presented in this work a full and accurate account of all the descendants of the Émigré Wilhelmus in the direct line leading up to James as well as some of the collaterals who deserve notice.

*See, for instance, Dr. White's edition of *The Beekman Mercantile Papers 1746–1799* (3 vols.; The New-York Historical Society, 1956).

Two large Beekman residences were erected on the Manhattan shore of the East River during the years 1763–1764 or thereabouts. The north-most one—"Rural Cove," the summer home of two bachelor brothers, William (1725–1795) and Abraham Beekman (1729–1789), the eldest sons of William Beekman, M.D. (1684–1770) and Catharine De La Noy Beekman (1691–1765)—was on a tract of land extending approximately from what is now 63d Street to 65th Street and from the River to the Boston Post Road (Third Avenue). The lower residence—"Mount Pleasant," overlooking the south-most tip of Blackwell's (now called Welfare) Island, the home of James Beekman (1732–1807) and his wife Jane Keteltas Beekman (1734–1817)—was on the shore of "Turtle Bay," where now we find Beekman Place.

The best known of these family residences is the latter, because of its historical background established during the years of the Revolution after the Mansion became Lord Howe's headquarters at the time the British occupied Manhattan Island in 1776. It was here that Nathan Hale was tried for espionage, convicted and condemned to death. Also a story is told that Major André slept in one of the bedrooms, having received his instructions, the night before starting out on his ill-fated mission to meet General Arnold across the Hudson River from West Point. In a memorandum given to James Beekman at the close of the Revolution we are informed that the house was successively occupied by General Howe from September 15th, 1776, for seven and a half months; Commissary Loring from May 1st, 1777, for one year and five months; General Clinton from October 20th, 1778, for three years and six and a half months; General Robertson from May 1st, 1782, for eleven and a half months; and the account ends as follows: " 'Mr. Beekman, the 16 of April, 1783' is 2 mos.[; and] 'General Clinton [*incorrectly for* General Carleton], the 16 of June, 1783' to the evacuation is 5 months—in the whole is 7 years, 1½ months."

James made some rather extravagant changes in his mansion some years following the close of the Revolution: building an

octagonal room with a handsomely carved mantel as a parlor, hanging on its walls a number of oil-painted cartoons, evidently in the school of Boucher, and furnishing it with fine chairs and sofas covered in Beauvais tapestry.*

These brothers—William, Abraham, and James, whose portraits by Lawrence Kilburn are reproduced in this volume—were loyal citizens of the Province in its fight for liberty, and when the British occupied Manhattan Island they sought refuge outside the City. The older brothers moved to Morristown, N. J., and James, as the reader will learn, found haven in the City of Kingston on the Hudson, where he served in the Provincial Congresses and was able to carry on part of his business as merchant. Tradition has it that some of the heirlooms, china and silver from "Rural Cove" were buried during the elder brothers' absence to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy. It is said that General Washington was a not infrequent visitor to "Mount Pleasant" while he resided in the City, to partake of a cup of tea with Mrs. Beekman.

Following the death of William and Abraham, much of their property, both real and personal, passed down to their nephew, John Beekman (1768–1843), the fourth son of James, who married Elizabeth Goad Bedlow (1771–1848) in the year 1792. She was the daughter of William Bedlow (1723?–1798), the first United States Postmaster of New York, who opened his office November 28th, 1783, three days following Washington's triumphant entry into the City. There were two sons and four daughters the result of this marriage about whom we know: Catharine (1798–1883) married Abraham Keteltas Fish. Mary (1800–1856) married William A. DePeyster. John Crosby (1802–1863) died unmarried. Jane (1805–1833) married Dr. Jacob Hallett Borrowe. William Fenwick (1809–1872) married Catharine Alexander Neilson (1814–1892). Lydia (1811–1883) married Joseph Foulke.

When James died in the year 1807, it was discovered that in 1801 he had by deed of gift given his farm, mansion and much

* All of these items may be seen on exhibition at The New-York Historical Society.

of its contents to his eldest son William (1754–1808), to wit:

> In consideration of the love and natural affection I bear to my eldest son William Beekman and for his fidelity and duty to his parents, I do hereby give to my said son William (after the decease of my wife) my family pictures [including the portraits of his wife and himself by Lawrence Kilburn], the box of painted hangings and my coach (as my other children refuse to use it on account of its not being fashionable) to him his heirs and assigns wishing that the family pictures should remain in the male branch of my family. As witness my hand the 9th May 1801.
>
> JAMES BEEKMAN
>
> In the presence of my wife
> JANE BEEKMAN

William died the year after his father and nine years before his mother, so the property was never actually in his possession. After Mrs. Beekman's death in the year 1817, the estate together with many of the heirlooms and the merchant's portraits came into the possession of the third son, James, Jr (1758–1837), who left them at his death to a young nephew, James W. Beekman, the only son of his deceased younger brother Gerard (1774–1833), passing over and omitting the elder brother John who, we may say, had already come into possession by inheritance of "Rural Cove," most of the older heirlooms and all the early family portraits—those by Evert Duyckinck of Colonel Gerardus Beekman and his wife, William Beekman, M.D., and his wife, and also two of his sisters, Cornelia (1708–1786), later Mrs. Walton, and Magdalen (1714–1784) who died unmarried. Gerard had married in the year 1810 Catharine Sanders (1785–1835), daughter of Captain John Sanders and Deborah Sanders his wife, of Scotia near Schenectady, descendants of a family of pioneers and men of distinction in central New York.

Hence, "Rural Cove" became the property of John, James Beekman's eldest married son with children and heirs; while Gerard's son, and his heirs, came into possession of "Mount Pleasant." It came about in this way that most of the older heirlooms and all of the earliest family portraits have come down to this time in the direct line of eldest sons of those

descended from John Beekman and his wife Elizabeth, while the heirlooms owned by James and the portraits of his family were passed down through a younger line until it ended because of the lack of a male heir of the name. Now the two groups of family portraits have been brought together temporarily.

There is little to be found concerning the life of John Beekman (1768–1843) and what there is appears to be contradictory in nature. It is discovered from James Beekman's papers that his fourth son, John, attended Washington Academy, Hackensack, N. J., between the years 1784 and 1786 (which would make him between 17 and 19 years of age at the time), under the instruction of Peter Wilson later to become Professor of Languages at Columbia College and Principal of Erasmus Hall Academy. What further education he received, if any, has not been discovered; we know he is not listed as a graduate of Columbia College as is his younger brother Gerard. It has been asserted that he became a physician but, from information which has been discovered in the Family Papers, it is more than probable that he followed in his father's footsteps and became a merchant, dealing in drugs. Perhaps, however, like others whose medical knowledge was mainly pragmatic, he did practice a little medicine on the side, for there were no laws controlling the practice of medicine at that time and there were few medical graduates. The facts are as follows:

The New York East Ward Assessment List for 1791 shows John to have been a resident at his father's "House & Store at 240 Queen Street" and assesses his personal estate at £100. Following his marriage to Miss Bedlow on November 3d, 1792, he moved his residence to 8 Broad Street but not his place of business, for the 1793 Directory lists him as "Apothecary" at the Queen Street address. His place of business was at 26 William Street during 1794 and 1795, 161 Broadway from 1799 to 1801, and Cherry corner of Charlotte from 1802 to 1806. He was listed in the Directory 1806/7–1807/8 as "navy-agent, Cherry near Charlotte," and 1808/9 merely as "John Beekman, Cherry corner of Charlotte." His name was not listed in the Directory of 1809 and subsequent listings of the name John

Beekman cannot be identified with the John who is under discussion. To bear out the assumption of his being a physician we are told that "when the residence of his son in East Twentieth Street was broken up, a large barrel of Chincona bark in the garret was a reminder of his efforts to make use of his medical knowledge." More probably it was a reminder of his business as a purveyor of drugs. Some of his father's business correspondence, particularly several letters dated 1792 or 1793, refer to drugs which John was importing from Europe. In the first of these, dated March 16th, 1792, and addressed to Ryer Schermerhorn who had gone to Amsterdam a year earlier and was then in London, James asks his friend to ship "an Assortment of Drugs and Medicines to Son John (who has set up in that line since you left America) . . . And as some articles in Medicine sell cheaper in Amsterdam than in London, Son John now writes you with a List of such as he most wants, if you think proper to furnish him therewith. . . ."

John apparently retired from active business about the year 1809, living on Waverly Place during the winter months and spending the summers at "Rural Cove" with his large family. Among the stories passed down in the family is one that tells of Mrs. Beekman sitting on the porch of the "Rural Cove" house one summer day soon after the penitentiary was finished on Blackwell's Island in the year 1828, "when an exhausted man in convict's clothes and dripping wet, suddenly appeared, having swum from the Island. He begged that she would help him for his pursuers were close at hand. Forgetting the law and only remembering the hunted man, she allowed him to hide in the cellar. . . ."

The next owner of "Rural Cove" was John Crosby Beekman, oldest son of John and Elizabeth G. B. Beekman, born in the year 1802—a confirmed old bachelor who was interested in his brother's and sister's families and his many friends. He was spoken of affectionately by his neighbors as "The Baron." His name is listed in the Directories from 1826 to 1828 as "John Crosby Beekman, teawarehouse, 1 Wall," but thereafter is found no longer. Being listed in *The Wealthy Citizens of the*

City of New York as worth $300,000, it may be presumed that he retired from active business at an early age to develop and cultivate the farm on the East River. That he was an agriculturist and interested in horticultural pursuits is testified to by the many prizes in the form of books and medals received by him from the American Institute Fair for his exhibits of flowers and vegetables. These have come down in the family. The family heirlooms he left to his only brother William Fenwick (1809–1872) and his real property was divided among his sisters and nephews and nieces. He died in his 61st year on April 17th, 1863.

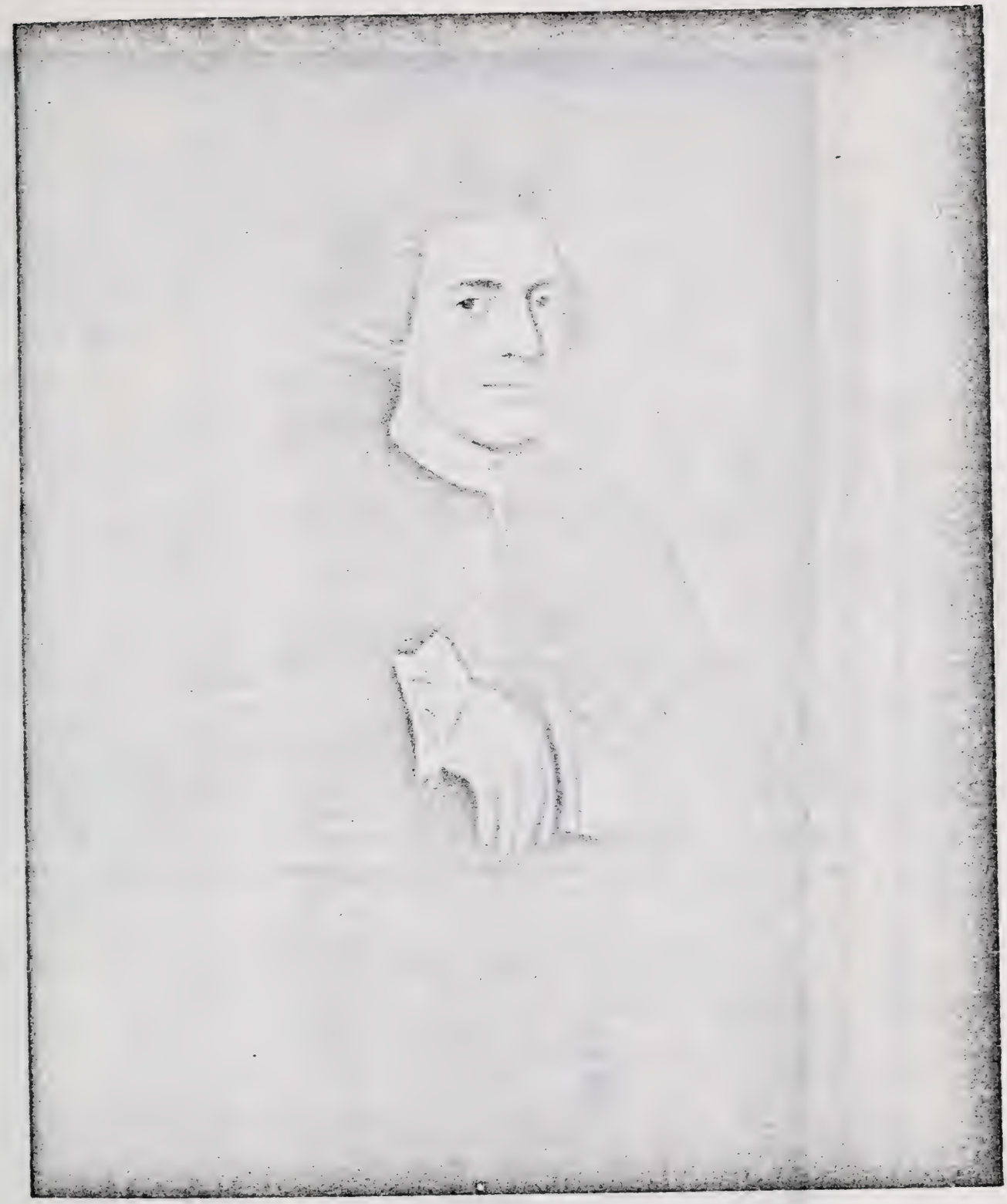
William Fenwick Beekman, born August 4th, 1809, named after his father's friend Colonel William Fenwick of South Carolina, was John Crosby Beekman's younger brother and the next in the direct line of descent after John Beekman. Although he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York in 1831 and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in the year 1834 with the degree of M.D., he never practiced medicine. Visiting the Continent of Europe in the year 1839, he made "The Grand Tour," travelling in his own carriage, so it may be presumed that the young man was comfortably well off as far as money was concerned. He married Catharine Alexander Neilson (1814–1892), the daughter of William and his wife Hannah Coles Neilson, on June 1st, 1841. They had seven children: six sons and one daughter.

William Bedlow Beekman (1842–1898), the eldest child of this union, did not receive a collegiate education, but entered business at an early age. Becoming a member of the New York Stock Exchange, he later served on its Board of Governors, completing several terms. He died in Summerville, S.C., on March 8th, 1898, a much-respected citizen of New York City. He was married twice: first, to Alice Keller (1842–1873), daughter of Charles M. Keller, a well-known patent lawyer of New York, and his wife Mary Sheppard Keller. There were two children born of this marriage: Charles Keller Beekman (1868–1941) who, having graduated from Columbia College with an A.B. degree in 1889 and from Columbia Law School

with a LL.B. in 1893, became a well-known corporation lawyer, a director of The Manufacturers' Trust Company of New York, and President of the Beekman Family Association from the year 1912 until the time of his death on February 25th, 1941; and a daughter, Catharine Alexander Beekman (1870–1951), who married John Welles Huger, an industrialist of Charleston, S.C., in the year 1901.

William Bedlow Beekman married, second, on October 10th, 1878, Katharine Morris Parker (1849–1925), by whom he had six children. She was the daughter of The Honorable Cortlandt Parker (1818–1907) of Perth Amboy and Newark, N.J., and Elizabeth Wolcott Parker, the daughter of Richard W. Stites of Morristown, N.J. Cortlandt Parker was an outstanding member of the Bar of New Jersey and an influential citizen and churchman. His daughter, Katharine, apparently inherited both character and ability from her father. Interested in historical and genealogical matters, she was one of the earliest members of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of the State of New York following its founding. Later, during the year 1897, she became influential in the restoration of the Van Cortlandt House in The Bronx and served as President of the Society during three terms from 1913 to 1916. Three of the children of this marriage died unmarried: Elizabeth Parker (1880–1881), Cortlandt (1886–1915), and Gertruydt Van Cortlandt (1890–1910). The remaining children married and had heirs: Héloise (1879–1936) married David Leavitt Hough, and Margretá Rutgers (1893– —) married Clarence Hascy Young. Fenwick Beekman (1882– —) married, first, Sabina Wood Struthers (1889–1950), daughter of Robert Struthers and Sabina Redmond Wood Struthers; and they had three sons: Fenwick Jr. (1913– —), Reverend Gerardus (1914– —), and Dr. Robert Struthers (1916– —). Fenwick Beekman married, second, Vera Byerley, daughter of Samuel Byerley and Lillian Tutt Byerley.

John Neilson Beekman (1843–1912), second son of William F. and Catharine A. Beekman, graduated from Columbia College as A.B. in 1864 and A.M. in 1867, and from the College



4. DR. ABRAHAM BEEKMAN (1729–1789)

Portrait by Abraham Delanoy, *c.* 1767

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

[Dr. Abraham Beekman with William Beekman (see plate 32), bachelor brothers of the merchant James Beekman (see plate 35), built the "Rural Cove" mansion near present 63d Street overlooking East River in the 1760's.]

5. "RURAL COVE" THE BEEKMAN MANSION AT 63d STREET AND EAST RIVER

Built by Dr. Abraham (1729–1789) and William Beekman (1725–1795) in the 1760's

Painting by Ernst Finkernagel, 1851

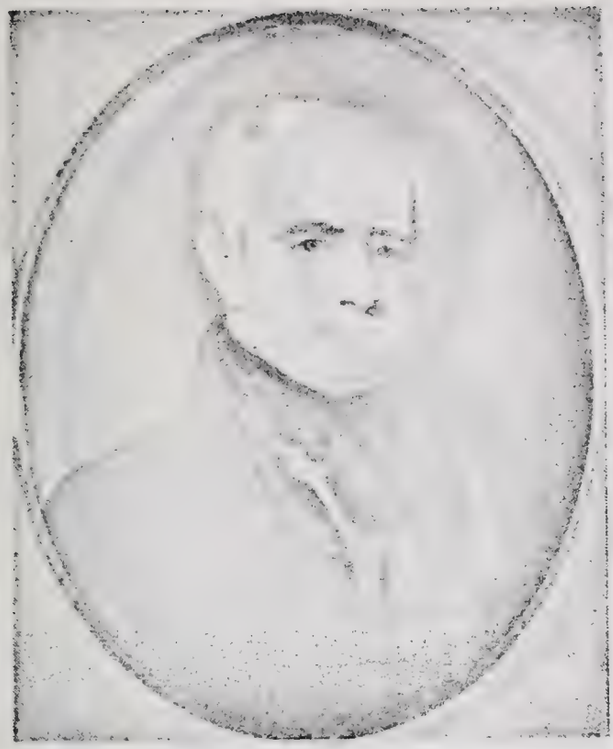
Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

6. "MOUNT PLEASANT," THE BEEKMAN MANSION AT 51st STREET AND EAST RIVER.

Built by James Beekman (1732–1807) in 1763–64; demolished in 1874

Watercolor painted for James W. Beekman by Abraham Hosier, 19th Century

In the Beekman Rooms at The New-York Historical Society, from The Beekman Family Association



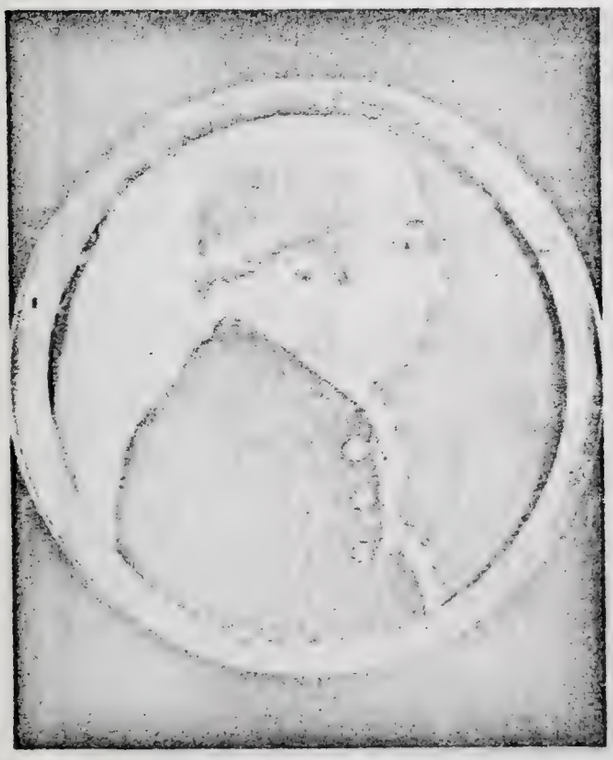
7. JOHN BEEKMAN
(1768–1843)

Son of James Beekman

8. MRS. JOHN BEEKMAN
(1771–1848)

(Mary Elizabeth Goad Bedlow)

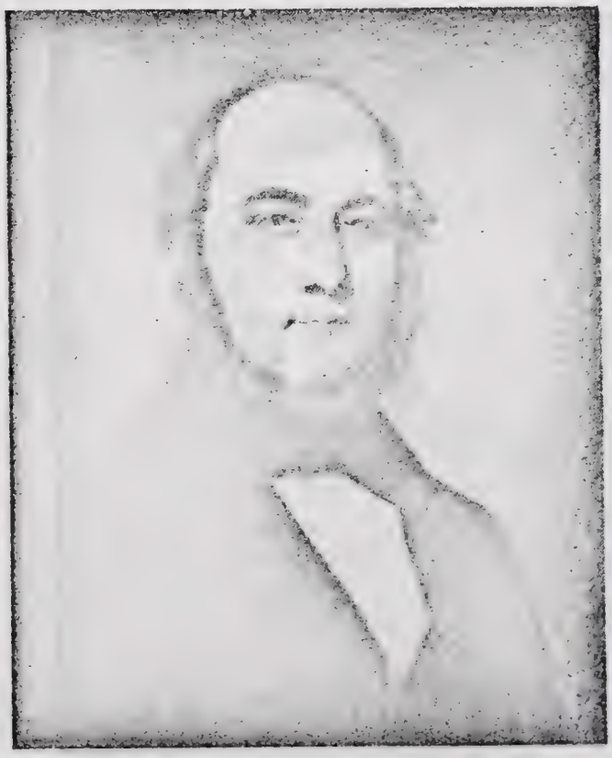
Miniatures, c. 1830, owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, their great-grandson



9. COL. WILLIAM BEDLOW
(1723?–1798)

Father of Mrs. John Beekman
Sketch by Tadeusz Kosciuszko

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman



10. JOHN CROSBY BEEKMAN
(1802–1863)

Son of John Beekman and
last owner of "Rural Cove"

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

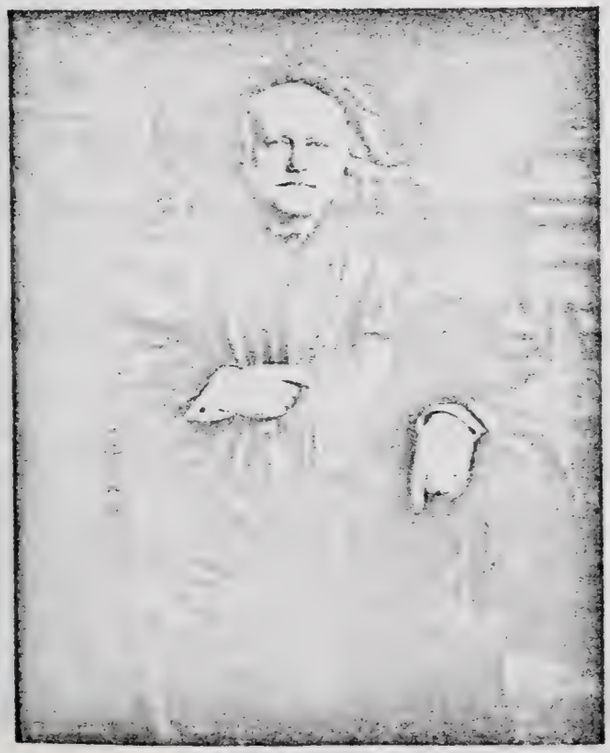
11. WILLIAM FENWICK BEEKMAN
(1809–1872)

Son of John Beekman

12. MRS. WILLIAM F. BEEKMAN
(1814–1892)

(Catharine Alexander Neilson)

Miniatures, c. 1841, owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, their grandson



13. HENRY RUTGERS BEEKMAN
(1845–1900)

Son of William Fenwick Beekman
Photo as N. Y. Supreme Court Justice

14. JAMES WM. BEEKMAN, JR.
(1847–1908)

Son of Hon. James W. Beekman
Port. by William M. Shettle, 1901

Gifts to The New-York Historical Society from The Beekman Family Association

15. WILLIAM BEDLOW BEEKMAN (1842–1898)

Eldest son of William F. & Catharine A. N. Beekman

Cabinet photograph taken about 1878

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, his son

16. MRS. WILLIAM BEDLOW BEEKMAN (1849–1925)

(Katharine Morris Parker)

Portrait by August Franzen, *c.* 1913

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, her son

17. FENWICK BEEKMAN, M.D. (1882–)

Son of William Bedlow Beekman and
Katharine Morris Parker Beekman

Portrait by DeWitt M. Lockman, N.A., 1949

Painted for The New-York Historical Society

of Physicians and Surgeons as M.D. in 1868. He served as House Surgeon at the New York Hospital after which he practiced for a few years before retiring at an early age. He was the first President of The Beekman Family Association, serving from 1910 to 1912 when he died. He married Annie L. Dawson but they had no children.

The third son of William Fenwick was Henry Rutgers Beekman (1845–1900), born on December 8th, 1845. Though living for only fifty-five years, he had a most distinguished career as lawyer, judge, and public servant. He graduated from Columbia College in 1865 and from the Law School in 1867, and was admitted to the Bar. Joining the firm of Ogden, Beekman and Ogden, which later took the name Beekman and Ogden, the young lawyer through concentration soon became recognized as an authority on real estate. His ability, conscientiousness and reputation for hard and painstaking work was soon generally known. He received appointment as Park Commissioner under Mayor Grace in 1884, serving for a time as President of the Department of Parks. Having been elected President of the Board of Aldermen in 1886, an office held by him for a year, he received an appointment of Counsel to the Corporation from Mayor Hewitt. Governor Hill named him, in 1889, one of the Commissioners for the Promotion of Uniformity of Legislation in the United States with Respect to Marriage, Divorce and other Subjects—a matter in which he showed great interest by giving time for study and wise advice. Being elected Judge of the Superior Court of the City of New York in November 1894, he became a Justice of the State Supreme Court in the First District on January 1st, 1896, under the new constitution of the State. Judge Henry R. Beekman's untimely death came suddenly, while on his way to court, on the morning of December 17th, 1900. Let us turn to his contemporaries to obtain an evaluation of his services to the community. An editorial from the *New-York Daily Tribune* is quoted to show one small side of him:

> The sudden and wholly unexpected death of Justice Beekman creates a vacancy on the Supreme Court bench which may be worthily filled, but it

is not an expression of merely conventional respect to say that the community has suffered a severe loss.

It was a fortunate result of the unusual political conditions existing in 1894 that Mr. Beekman was elected to a Judicial office for which he was peculiarly qualified by temperament, talents and inclination, but to which under other ordinary circumstances, he would never have attained. He was a wise, faithful and incorruptible judge, whose too brief service in that capacity confirmed the highest estimate of his character and abilities. He had already done much valuable work of a public nature when he was raised to the bench, and the Rapid Transit act, under which an indispensable undertaking [the New York subway system] is being safely carried out, is an enduring monument to his sagacity and prudence.

Judge Beekman married Isabella Lawrence, daughter of Richard and Josephine Bayley Lawrence. There were four children the result of this marriage but all remained single. They were Josephine Lawrence (1872–1953), William Fenwick (1873–1936), Mary Elizabeth (1877?–1944), and Henry Rutgers Beekman, Jr. (1880–1938).

Of the remaining children of William Fenwick and Catharine A. Beekman, James Hude (1848–1902) married Florence Delaplaine but there were no children; Neilson (1850–1861) and Herman (1852–1897) did not marry; and Fanny Neilson Beekman (1856–1882) married Robert Adrain of New Brunswick, N.J., and had a daughter.

It is worth notice, perhaps, that there has been a member of the family who was particularly interested in some branch of the healing art in every one of the eight generations of the direct line since the family arrived in America. It is not possible to discover in all cases whether the particular individual had actually graduated from some school in medicine, but it is probable, from the information obtained, that almost all of them did practice medicine or were closely affiliated in some manner with the healing art. Colonel Gerardus, son of the Émigré, is universally recognized as having practiced medicine during the early years of the Colony. His son, William, is mentioned by several historians as a physician; one of whom writes: "His services in 1745, when there was an epidemic of smallpox and lingering fever, were so valued as to receive a

vote of thanks from the City." Abraham, William's son and James Beekman's elder brother, is known through records found among the Beekman papers to have actively practiced medicine at Morristown, N.J., during the years of the Revolution, and is presumed to have been a physician. Returning to the line of descent, it is known that Abraham's nephew, John, was a merchant who imported many types of drugs and was interested in and perhaps occasionally practiced medicine. His son, William Fenwick, and his grandson, John Neilson, both received medical degrees. And finally, Fenwick Beekman and his son, Robert S., of the seventh and eighth generations, respectively, of those born in America, are graduates in medicine and are active practitioners.

Let us now turn to "The Philanthropist," James William Beekman. Although the author of this work has given the reader an extensive account of this the most distinguished member of the family to live during the nineteenth century, there are a number of facts that should be mentioned in addition to the already rather complete narrative which has been presented under the heading of "A Civic-Minded Citizen, 1854–1877." The reader will learn from this work that J. W. Beekman took his family to Europe in the spring of 1854 so as to successfully complete Mrs. Beekman's convalescence following cholera, from which the doctors had despaired of her recovery. But he does not tell us that shortly after their return to New York in 1856, her husband purchased a city dwelling at 5 East 34th Street (probably in 1857), the doctors having warned him against having his wife live at "Mount Pleasant" so close to the East River, and here he resided during the winter months until the time of his death in 1877. Seeking a country place, he purchased a parcel of land, on April 9th, 1863, of about sixteen acres, situated on the west shore of Oyster Bay overlooking the southerly point of Center Island and Cove Neck across the inner bay, where some years later Theodore Roosevelt built his home "Sagamore Hill." This land was added to by later purchases until there were over fifty acres. On a hill overlooking the water he built his house, which

he named "The Cliffs"—a large, comfortable dwelling with wide windows and steep slate roof decorated with cast-iron ornaments so commonly used by the architects of that day. Some years later a large entrance hall with broad, winding staircase and sumptuous dining room was added, with bedrooms above. Beautiful gardens with sturdy hedges surrounded the mansion and there was a greenhouse and other outbuildings, a gardener's cottage, a large stable and carriage house, a cow barn and a poultry house. An old mill was renovated and converted to pump cold, clear water to the house from an artesian well near the mill pond. In short, it was a country place that any gentleman of that day might be proud of owning. Here Mr. and Mrs. Beekman lived in comfort with their children during the summer months. The grounds of this estate were further improved during the succeeding generation when a handsome rose garden was added and water gardens and fountains were constructed with numerous paths leading through the grounds.

James William Beekman's interest in historical matters also should be mentioned. Probably the most important contribution made by him in this field was the *Centenary Address Delivered before The Society of the New York Hospital* (an historical narrative of medical practice during the City's early years) on July 24th, 1871. The printed version of this is considered today to be almost a classic in the medical history of New York City and is sought after by historians in this field.

He was a member of the St. Nicholas Society during the last thirty-one years of his life and served as its President during the years of 1868 and 1869. His well-known presidential address, *The Founders of New York*, was delivered at the Anniversary Dinner held on December 4th of the latter year. He was also Trustee of Green-Wood Cemetery from 1860 to the time of his death and is said to have been a very active member of the Board.

In regard to his membership in The New-York Historical Society, in which he served two periods upon its Executive Committee (1846–1854 and 1868–1877), as Corresponding

Secretary (1848–1854) and as Second Vice-President (1872–1877), let us quote an excerpt from Edward F. De Lancy's *Memoir of James William Beekman** which strikes one as still eminently appropriate, as much of the historical family material has now found a permanent home within its walls:

> I cannot close this brief memoir of our friend without adverting to his long connexion, for more than a generation, with the New York Historical Society. Its objects were dear to his heart, and early and late, in season and out of season, he labored in its behalf. He gave freely to its objects, and to its collections. For forty years, save one, he was an active member, and his interest in it never flagged; and at the time of his death he was one of its Vice-Presidents, and a member of its Executive Committee. Entering its Library one morning, hardly three years ago, the writer found the Librarian examining two large splendidly-bound folio volumes, most beautifully printed in the Dutch language. "See," said he, "here is the finest copy in America of the first Dutch Bible ever printed in Holland. It is a perfect treasure, and has just been given to us by Mr. Beekman." He had indeed done so. Learning that this rare work was for sale in the city, he at once, after satisfying himself of its genuineness, bought it though held at a large price, and sent it to the Library. Such was Mr. Beekman's last gift to the Society, and it was characteristic of the man in more ways than one.

James William Beekman (1815–1877) married Abian Steele Milledoler (1820–1897), the daughter of The Reverend Philip Milledoler, President of Rutgers College, on March 18th, 1840. There were five children: Catharine (1841–1923) married William Warner Hoppin, from Providence, R.I., a distinguished lawyer; Gerard (1842–1918) never married; Philip Milledoler died in infancy; James William, Jr. (1847–1908) never married; and Cornelia Augusta (1849–1917) never married.

Gerard and his brother, James William, Jr., together with their sister Cornelia, resided successively at 5 East 34th Street, 419 Madison Avenue, and 35 East 38th Street during the winter months of each year and spent the spring, summer and autumn at "The Cliffs," their beautiful estate with its unique formal gardens and handsome horses and modern equipages which were kept up by them meticulously. These bachelor

* Prepared at the request of, and published by, the St. Nicholas Society, 1877.

brothers were, if the term may be used, "gentlemen of the old school," possessing tremendous family pride, enjoying a formal manner of living, and exhibiting a most courteous and thoughtful behavior towards others. They had their private yacht, designed by Gerard, and were among the founders of the Seawanhaka-Corinthean Yacht Club of Oyster Bay.

James William Beekman, Jr., although a graduate of the Columbia Law School in 1871, never practiced. He was more the man of the world than was his brother Gerard. Claiming membership in most of the socially important clubs and patriotic societies in the City, he served as President of the St. Nicholas Society in 1889–1890, and of the Holland Society in 1893. Of more importance, he followed in his father's footsteps as a member of the Board of Governors of the Society of the New York Hospital and also served as Trustee of the New York Society Library and the New York Dispensary, as well as being a member of the Executive Committee of The New-York Historical Society. *The Century Association Report* says that he held these positions "as of right" and contributed "his time and energy most lavishly."

Gerard, the elder brother, inherited "The Cliffs" and family heirlooms and portraits from his father. Born on August 18th, 1842, he graduated from Columbia College with the class of 1864 and received the degree of Master of Arts in 1867, the same year that he was granted his LL.B. from the Law School. Then he entered the law office of Edgar S. Van Winkle, to fit himself, it is said, for the management of his father's property. Here he devised, we are told, a form of ground lease that is still in use. He was one of the founders of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and he also became a member of the Bar Association of the State of New York; however, he never actively practiced his profession. Being deeply interested in education, he was elected a Trustee of Columbia University in 1878, serving until the time of his death (having become in the meantime senior Trustee), and he acted from 1879 to 1891 as Clerk of the Board. He was a member of the Executive Committee and the first person to hold the office of

Third Vice-President of The New-York Historical Society, a title which was established in 1913, serving until the time of his death.

Always interested in charitable and philanthropic affairs, and willing at all times to give of his time and means to their advancement, he became particularly helpful to the Seamen's Church Institute, the American Bible Society of which he became a Manager and later Vice-President, and the Green-Wood Cemetery on the Board of which he served for twenty years. A member and Vestryman of Christ Church, Oyster Bay, he contributed freely of his means to its support and endeavors, and at the time of his death established prizes and gifts, in the form of Bibles, for the graduating class of the local high school. Aside from these activities, he was a member of the Sons of the Revolution of the State of New York, the St. Nicholas Society, the City Club, the Downtown Association, the New York Yacht Club, the Seawanhaka-Corinthean Yacht Club, the Lotus Club, the University Club, and the Century Association.

Gerard Beekman founded The Beekman Family Association in the year 1910—a membership corporation under the Laws of the State of New York—as a benevolent organization to provide assistance to individuals and contribute to worthy charities and philanthropies. This he endowed at his death on November 9th, 1918, and gave to it by deed of gift the family heirlooms and portraits for safekeeping, since he was the last of the male line in direct descent from James Beekman through his youngest son, Gerard.

It is by the use of many of the records taken from the archives passed down in this line that the author, Mr. White, has been able to obtain much of the information that is given to the reader in this work. And it is possible to produce this work, *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce 1647–1877*, in book form only because of the beneficence of Gerard Beekman, who, through The Beekman Family Association, provided the way and means for having it written and published.

PROLOGUE

European Background

1

EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

According to Washington Irving in his facetious Knickerbocker's *History of New York*, the Beekmans derive their name from the "lordly dimensions" of the proboscis which allegedly projected from the countenance of the earliest American member of the family "like the beak of a parrot."[1] Actually there is no surviving evidence as to the contours of William Beekman's face, and the features of his descendants (see illustrations) lend only a little support to the Irving thesis. In fact the name in the original Dutch means simply stream or creek man. It was and still is quite common in the Low Countries.

Paradoxically, although the national allegiance as well as the family name of the emigrant William Beekman was clearly Dutch, the earliest known ancestor of the Beekman family lived in the German city of Cologne. This man was Cornelius Beekman. A letter written in 1702 to the elderly William Beekman in New York by a nephew in Amsterdam in response to William's request for information about the family history states that Cornelius, although his birthplace was unknown, lived at Cologne about the middle of the sixteenth century. He is reported to have married a young woman with the very Dutch name, Christiana Huygens, and on May 17, 1558, to have become the father of a son who was named Gerardus. Although the letter offers no reasons for the presence of Cor-

[1] Washington Irving, *A History of New York* (rev. ed., New York: G. P. Putnam & Son, 1867), 383.

nelius in Cologne, a most plausible explanation is afforded by the history of the period.[2]

The Protestant Reformation had won many converts in The Netherlands[3] in Cornelius Beekman's lifetime despite the ruthless efforts of the ruling Spanish authorities to suppress the heresy. In 1550 these efforts had been intensified by the issuance of the "blood placard" which condemned all heretics to death. Although this policy could not be fully carried out, there were many executions, particularly among the predominantly lower-class Anabaptists whose evangelical and communistic zeal seemed to endanger political and economic as well as religious institutions. Under this threat tens of thousands fled The Netherlands during the decade of the 1550's, often with the connivance of local officers of the Catholic faith who had no stomach for the Inquisition. The fleeing Protestants sought refuge chiefly in England and in such German cities as Emden, Wesel, and Cologne.

The lot of Protestants at Cologne was much easier than in The Netherlands. There had been a colony of Anabaptists at Cologne since 1534. In 1540 the Archbishop, who was also *ex officio* the temporal ruler of the area, had become a Protestant; he managed to retain power until 1547. In that year as a consequence of intervention by external forces Catholic control was reëstablished under a new Archbishop, but Protestantism was too firmly entrenched to be exterminated. In 1555 a limited toleration was extended to Lutherans in Cologne as well as in other German areas by the Peace of Augsburg, although the status of non-Lutheran Protestants remained officially unchanged.

Because Cornelius Beekman apparently chose Cologne rather than England or one of the more northerly German cities as a

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, the sources for the general information in the following portion of this chapter are standard works on Dutch, Belgian, Spanish and German history in this period, supplemented by local histories of Cologne and Liege. Information on the Beekman family, unless otherwise indicated, comes from the letter of 1702.

[3] The reader should bear in mind that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the term "Netherlands" designated not only the country which now bears that name, but also the area of present-day Belgium.

nelius, in view of the opportunities he seems to have provided his son Gerardus, apparently belonged.

Gerardus Beekman's career indicates quite clearly that his family must have enjoyed considerable stature. According to the family document of 1702 he studied in 1576–1578 at a German Protestant University where he reportedly "excelled" in literature and became proficient in five languages. His bride, it is said, came from a family associated with the noble House of Orange and Gerard himself was for a time a notary public at Cologne. The most clear-cut evidence of his standing, however, emerges from his involvement in an important historical development of the early seventeenth century.

Intertwined religious and nationalistic conflicts brought Europe in 1610 to the brink of continental warfare such as it was to know all too well less than a decade later in the Thirty Years' War. The Dutch, although temporarily at truce, had been struggling since 1566 for independence from the rule of Catholic Spain. Cologne, still under Catholic control, contained nevertheless an aggressive Protestant community which had contributed financially to the Dutch cause, had harbored hordes of heretical refugees, and continued constantly to jockey for political advantage. Between Cologne and The Netherlands were many petty German governments in which Protestants and Catholics struggled constantly for power. In 1609 the death of the Catholic ruler of Julich, Cleve, Berg, and Mark in this area left two German Lutherans, both already heads of powerful governments, as the strongest in a large field of claimants for his titles. Because consolidation of Protestant control in this area would have weakened the Spanish by strengthening the position of the Dutch and of other German Protestant communities, the English as well as the Dutch supported the two Lutheran claimants as they beat off the first Catholic attempt to regain control. A general conflict seemed inevitable until Henry IV of France, whose fear of Austria and Spain had led him also to support the Protestants, was killed by an assassin. The French government then came

under less aggressive influences with the result that the general conflict was averted for some years.

Gerardus was involved in these developments in two ways. First, according to the family letter of 1702, he was among the members of one of the many Protestant delegations which journeyed to England in the quest for support against the Catholic forces.[5] Secondly, according to a standard history of Cologne[6] as well as the family manuscript, Gerardus was among the Protestant leaders of that city who in 1612 joined in the effort to erect at Mulheim, just down the Rhine from Cologne, an "evangelical stronghold" designed to usurp the commercial power of Cologne as well as to provide a fortress for the military security of Protestantism.

The Mulheim operation was obviously inspired by optimistic expectations with reference to the Julich succession question. In 1610, after seizing the principal stronghold of the area from a Catholic claimant, the two Lutheran "Possessioners," as they were then called, had served notice on the authorities at Cologne that they were assuming responsibility for "protection" of that city as well and that they would require not only freedom of movement through Cologne but also military assistance to the extent of 500 infantry and 1000 cavalry. After the war crisis had passed, the two Lutherans soon broke with each other. One, the Count Palatine of Neuburg, ostentatiously created a breach in the wall of Mulheim and withdrew his workmen in submission to the demand issued by the Holy Roman Emperor at the behest of the Catholic authorities at Cologne that construction work at Mulheim cease and that the works already completed be destroyed. The Elector of Brandenburg on the other hand, defiantly repaired the damage inflicted by his former collaborator and continued to support the con-

[5] The letter states further that the Beekman coat of arms was granted Gerardus by King James I in the course of such a mission. Two seemingly diligent researchers were unable in 1923 to find evidence in London to support this assertion, but they thought it not at all improbable (B.F.P., Box 12).

[6] L. Ennen, *Geschichte der Stadt Köln* (Düsseldorf: Schwannschen, 1880), V, 558. See also Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People after the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. A. M. Christie (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1925), X, *passim*.

struction effort until Spanish forces intervened. Then the Elector had no choice but to agree to the destruction of the new city. The disputed territories were then divided nominally between the Elector and the Count Palatine of Neuburg. Julich and Berg went to Neuburg; the Elector received Cleve and Mark.

This development put Gerardus Beekman in a difficult position. The Catholic authorities at Cologne were now backed by Spanish troops; they could not be expected to welcome the return of a resident who had been one of the leaders in the Mulheim operation which aimed to destroy them. The family account reports that Gerardus was forced to flee to avoid capture by Spanish troops and that in so doing he sacrificed considerable property which he had acquired at Cologne. In any case he now entered the service of the Elector of Brandenburg in Cleve. The official record of his son's marriage in 1621 notes that Gerardus was then "auditor and secretary" in the government of that German territory.[7] It is reported in the letter of 1702 that he died at Emmerick in the Cleve area in 1625 at the age of sixty-six.

Henry, the son of Gerardus Beekman, moved from Cologne to the nearby district of Berg, probably at about the time when it seemed likely that the cooperation of Brandenburg and Neuburg would assure Protestant control in that area. In Berg Henry is said to have become the owner of two mills, one of which reportedly manufactured gunpowder. After the death of his wife about 1619 the young entrepreneur sacrificed these business interests by moving to the United Netherlands in order to escape Catholic rule which had been imposed in Berg according to the terms of the settlement of 1614 between Brandenburg and Neuburg. Settled at last in an area where Protestantism was secure, Henry married at Zutphen in 1621 the daughter of the theologian, William Baudartius, one of Dutch Calvinism's most zealously orthodox protagonists. Henry's occupation at the time of his marriage is not known,

[7] The Beekman Family Papers contain a true copy of this document.

but the autobiography of his father-in-law[8] states that he was later "secretary" of the city of Hasselt in the province of Overyssel. The letter of 1702 asserts further that the Dutch government named him Superintendent of its magazines at Hasselt and Wesel in 1629 when the Dutch war for independence had resumed in conjunction with the Thirty Years' War. Shortly after this appointment the death of his wife, Maria, who had borne five sons since 1621, left Henry a widower for the second time. He married once more in 1634, but he himself lived only until 1642.

William Beekman who emigrated to America in 1647 was the second of the five sons of Henry and Maria. He was born April 28, 1623, but his birthplace is uncertain. His older brother, Gerard, later a minister, was born in Zutphen in 1622, and at least two of William's younger brothers were born at Hasselt according to municipal records there.[9] William himself was probably born in one or the other of these Dutch communities for there is no indication that his family ever lived elsewhere.

William was the heir to powerful traditions. The preceding paragraphs attest the intensity of the religious loyalty which apparently characterized William's father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather. Surely he was influenced also by the rigid convictions of his maternal grandfather, William Baudartius, for whom he probably was named and who lived until William was seventeen.

Four years before William Beekman's birth Baudartius had been a leading figure at the famous Synod of Dort. In effect the Synod formalized and promulgated the religious views of the Protestant faction which had at last emerged victorious in a long political contest. The defeated party, representative largely of the commercial centers, had urged rigorous separation of church and state, tolerance of religious differences, and a liberal view of the requisites for salvation. It had also favored peace with Spain and the preservation of decentralized,

[8] A translation of this document is included in the Beekman Family Papers.

[9] True copies of these birth records are included in the Beekman Family Papers.

merchant-dominated government. The victorious party, representative in considerable measure of the exposed frontier provinces and of the huge refugee population, insisted on close cooperation of church and state, the narrow predestinarian doctrine of salvation usually associated with Calvinism, and suppression of any form of heresy. The political policies linked with these doctrines were vigorous prosecution of the war against Spain for control of the southern provinces (later Belgium) and a more centralized government with greater popular participation. At the conclusion of the Synod the leader of the opposition party was tried for his earlier conduct, now found to be heretical, and executed.

Baudartius, as his participation in the Synod of Dort suggests, enjoyed considerable stature as an intellectual leader. At the Synod he had participated not only in the formulation of the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church, but also in prescribing its forms of worship. Furthermore, he was one of the handful of scholars selected to make the authorized translation of the Bible into Dutch. In 1632 when the Old Testament translation was completed after many years of effort, it was immediately acclaimed on all sides and has been employed ever since. In addition to this scholarly activity William Baudartius also published some poems and a highly partisan chronicle of Dutch history from 1603 to 1624, one of the earliest scholarly works to be published in Dutch. He also left an autobiography which remains unpublished.

William Beekman's activities in these years are almost unknown. Certainly he received a good education. Probably he attended one of the several universities founded by the Dutch Calvinists, but there is no information on this point. He may have held offices in his local church and the local government as reported by his descendants, but no evidence has been found to substantiate either point. His mother had died when he was about seven; his father when William was nineteen. At twenty-three William departed for America.

The reasons for William's emigration in 1646 are not readily apparent. Prospects in the Dutch Netherlands could hardly have been better. The protracted war for independence had

obviously been won; the formal recognition of that fact, achieved in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, was already clearly foreshadowed. Despite topographical features which led an English traveler to describe their country as a "universal quagmire . . . an equilibrium of mud and water,"[10] the Dutch had built upon fishing, manufacturing, their strategic location at the mouths of several of Europe's principal rivers, and their former privileged trading status within the world-circling Spanish Empire a commerce unequalled by that of any other nation in the western world. While the continental powers bled themselves in the Thirty Years' War and England occupied itself with domestic problems generated under Charles I, Holland remained the banking and insurance as well as the shipping center of Europe. English visitors found the country notable for comparative economic equality, for the absence of class distinctions, for industriousness, cleanliness, hospitality, as well as for strong antipathy to Spaniards, Catholicism, and monarchy.[11] Culturally the Dutch were enjoying their "Golden Age" which featured, in addition to the painters Rubens, Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, and Ruysdael, the philosopher Spinoza, the legal scholar Hugo Grotius, and others of note in science and literature. On the other hand the Holland merchants had long since regained the political ascendancy which William's grandfather had helped to take from them and there was future trouble for the country in the increasing strength of both France and England, but it seems highly unlikely that either of these factors influenced William's decision. His action was apparently dictated by personal considerations which probably included the desire for adventure.

Assuming that William Beekman desired to "seek his fortune" abroad, why did he select the West India Company as his vehicle rather than the East India Company? The latter had been granted military and diplomatic powers as well as a trade monopoly in its area by the terms of its charter and had

[10] Owen Feltham, *A Brief Character of the Low Countries* (London: Anne Seile, 1661), 45. Feltham's travels had taken place in 1650.

[11] *Ibid.*, *passim*; Sir William Temple, *Observations Upon the United Provinces* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1705), *passim*. Temple's observations were made while he was Ambassador to The Hague in 1668.

enjoyed spectacular success ever since its founding in 1602, both as a profit-maker and as an empire-builder. The West India Company had had a more checkered career. Its creation had been urged almost from the time of the granting of the East India Company charter, but its advocates, many of whom thought of it primarily as a device for preying upon Spanish colonies and commerce, found themselves blocked by the indifference or hostility of the politically dominant Holland merchants who wished nothing to interfere with the twelve-year truce in the Dutch-Spanish conflict which they managed to arrange in 1609. The political defeat of the mercantile faction and the termination of the truce in 1621, however, enabled the more zealously anti-Spanish forces to charter the West India Company in that year not only for the purpose of preying upon Spanish colonies and commerce but also in order to colonize in its own right. The company enjoyed some early success, notably in wresting a large section of Brazil from Spanish control and in capturing an entire Spanish treasure fleet in 1628. Soon after that, however, the political enemies of its founders returned to power and the company began to be neglected. By 1646 it had long since ceased to be profitable and was on the verge of losing its Brazilian territory by revolution. That William Beekman voluntarily associated himself with this floundering enterprise rather than with its more successful East Indian counterpart suggests that political loyalties may have figured in the choice. The rationality of the decision is difficult to justify without such an assumption.

Whatever his reasons, William Beekman departed from Amsterdam at Christmas, 1646, bound for the settlement which the West India Company had established in the year of his birth on Manhattan Island. In command of the three-ship expedition was Peter Stuyvesant, newly appointed Director-General of New Netherland. The long voyage afforded William, who traveled in the same ship as Stuyvesant, an excellent opportunity to appraise the complex character of the leader with whom he was long to be associated in political activity. Had he been able to make such an appraisal before, William might well have reconsidered his determination to emigrate.

13-14

THE PUBLIC SERVANTS

2

WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1623-1707)

Frontier Administrator and Protagonist of Self-Government

On May 11, 1647 as he debarked from the *Princess* with the new Director-General of New Netherland, William Beekman witnessed Manhattan Island's first great ovation to an arriving hero. Long since disgusted with the arbitrary government of the incompetent Governor Kieft whom they blamed for the unnecessary Indian War which had recently devastated the Colony, the few hundred inhabitants of the Island turned out en masse to greet the military hero who was Kieft's successor. Reinforced by settlers from up the river and from across the bay they virtually exhausted their supplies of powder in firing salutes of welcome to the one-legged veteran who was their new commander.

But disillusionment was not long in coming. The new Director's bearing was observed to be "like a peacock's, with great state and pomp." For several hours he kept a group of the leading citizens before him bareheaded while he remained covered "as if he was the Czar of Muscovy."[1] There was an ominous note, too, in the paternalism of his promise to "govern you as a father his children, for the advantage of the chartered West India Company, and these burghers and this land."[2]

Peter Stuyvesant was indeed a strong man. The son of an

[1] John R. Brodhead, *History of the State of New York* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Bros., 1859), I, 465. This work is cited hereafter as Brodhead.

[2] Brodhead, 433.

orthodox minister, he was steeped in Calvinism—a cause he had chosen to serve in a military role with the West India Company. His record in fighting the Portuguese in Brazil had secured him the appointment as Governor of Curaçao. Despite the failure of the attack which he initiated in that capacity against the Portuguese stronghold of St. Martin, Stuyvesant's reputation was still high when he returned to The Netherlands in 1644 to secure a substitute for the leg he had lost during that encounter. In administrative firmness as well as religious zeal the now wooden-legged veteran had been deemed just the man to restore the floundering colony of New Netherland to the prosperity the company directors expected of it.[3]

The character which had impressed the company directors had been made known to William Beekman and his fellow passengers during a long voyage, for Stuyvesant, who was still Governor of Curaçao, insisted that the entire expedition proceed by way of that West Indian island. This detour lengthened the voyage to five months instead of the usual two and undoubtedly contributed to the death of more than fifteen of the passengers. At Curaçao there was an incident which revealed more sharply the Director's temperament. The fiscal officer Van Dyck, who had been appointed by the company directors as one of Stuyvesant's principal subordinates, was confined to shipboard during a three weeks' stay in port for having presumed the right to share the leader's council table.[4]

At the conclusion of the voyage, however, a fascinating new world greeted the debarking passengers. There is no record of young William's reaction to America, but we may infer that it was not unlike that of Nicasius de Sille, who arrived a few years later:

> This country suits me exceedingly well. I shall not try to leave it as long as I live. . . . [It] does a large trade in furs, especially beavers, which are sold to us by the savages by the thousand for Dutch merchandise. All

[3] The best biography of Stuyvesant is the sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography* which was written by Victor H. Paltsits.

[4] Brodhead, *op. cit.*, 437.

the people here are traders. . . . It goes here in the manner of the Old Testament; wealth consists in oxen and horses to plow with, and in cows, sheep and goats. . . . Children and pigs multiply here rapidly and more than anything else, but there is a lack of women. The rivers are full of fish, good edible fish. . . . Oysters we pick up here before our fort. . . . The weeds consist mostly of strawberries, catnip and blackberries. . . . In fine, one can live here and forget Patria. Beer is brewed here as good as in Holland, of barley and wheat. . . . No gold or silver circulates here, but beads, which Indians make and call sewant [Wampum, *for which he gives exchange rates to Dutch coins*]. The women of the neighborhood entertain each other with a pipe and a brazier; young and old, they all smoke. . . . Very good tobacco is grown here.[5]

Moderation of this tone, but by no means disillusionment, was evident in a later letter of de Sille which recounted to another friend that "They brew good beer here, but the wine still comes from the fatherland. . . . The increase of cattle and people, but mostly of children and pigs, proceeds merrily; in fine I shall not go back to Holland, but intend to remain here for the rest of my life."[6]

A less rosy picture of New Amsterdam, differently detailed, was seen some years earlier, in 1643, by the Catholic missionary, Father Jogues, a veteran sojourner in America and one who had suffered much among the Indians from whom he had escaped to the Dutch. On Manhattan he found a fort "to serve as a commencement of a town." The fort's bastions were mere mounds of earth and badly crumbled at that. One could walk in anywhere. There were sixty soldiers to man this establishment as well as the one up the river at what is now Albany. Inside the Manhattan fort were a church, government house, storehouses and barracks. Around the island were some 400 to 500 men among whom, it was said, eighteen languages could be heard. To secure superior farm land as well as to avoid competition in trading with the wandering Indians, the immigrants had scattered themselves over a wide area. Wartime casualties,

[5] Isaac N. P. Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498–1909* (6 vols.; New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1916–28), IV, 148–49. This work is cited hereafter as Stokes.

[6] Stokes, IV, 153.

the priest noted, were thus higher than they would have been if the settlers had been more closely linked.[7]

If New Netherland as described by Nicasius de Sille and by Father Jogues seems a fairly primitive community, it must be remembered that it was as recently as 1609 that Hudson made his famous voyage up that majestic river, that only twenty years had elapsed since the real estate coup of Peter Minuit in "purchasing" Manhattan Island for a sum popularly remembered as $24.00. From the time of Hudson to that of Minuit fur traders had been active in the area, but no settlement was actually made until that for which Minuit's purchase confirmed the land title. Even then the settlement was a "company town" in which the West India Company kept title to all the land and maintained, too, a monopoly of trading privileges.

In the 1630's the unprofitability of this expensive business venture had led to radical measures of reform. Land titles began to be passed out to individuals; trading rights for domestic and overseas trade were granted to the inhabitants under restrictions more nearly analogous to those of a government. Under these new policies settlers of a variety of nationalities began to trickle in, giving the area more of the atmosphere of a village. The prosperity and happiness which the residents might have expected were denied, however, by the arbitrary actions of Stuyvesant's predecessor who wrestled ineffectively with such problems as the wampum inflation, the building of a church and, most important of all, relations with the Indians. It was his blundering into war with the Indians that had led to the replacement of Kieft by the more efficient, though hardly less dictatorial, Stuyvesant.

In addition to the local problems which he inherited from Kieft, or proceeded to make for himself, the new governor was faced by difficulties arising from new aspects of the old international power struggle. Stuyvesant managed to send off one expedition against Spanish commerce, but within a year of his arrival in New Netherland the legitimacy of that ancient and

[7] J. Franklin Jameson (ed.), *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609–1664* (New York: Scribners, 1909), 259–61. This work is cited hereafter as Jameson.

honorable form of enterprise was removed by the final restoration of peace in the treaty of Westphalia.

The prosperity of The Netherlands, the basis for its Golden Age, had arisen to an important extent from trading privileges within the old Spanish Empire and later from legalized plundering of that empire during the long struggle for independence. These opportunities were now ended. Replacing them as a source of Dutch wealth was the exploitation of the new colonial empire, much of which had been wrested from the Spanish enemy. But the enjoyment of continued prosperity was menaced by two new international developments.

France, with four times the Dutch population, was now rising to the military predominance long enjoyed by Spain. Holland's wealth was to prove tempting. Even more important was the growth of maritime power in England, sheltered by its insularity from continental land forces. In 1649 and 1651 there were enacted the first of the English Navigation Acts designed by mercantilist thinkers to stop England's economic tribute to the Dutch. Following upon those acts came the series of Anglo-Dutch wars which were to play so important a role in ending the greatness of the Golden Age of Holland and to influence strongly the history of New Netherland and the biography of William Beekman.

In the then relatively insignificant portion of the Dutch colonial empire which the West India Company administered[8]

[8] The organization of the Dutch West India Company was unusual. Analogous roughly to the members of a modern corporation's board of directors were chambers of managers representing stockholders of each of five districts of the Netherlands. The vote of each chamber was arbitrarily fixed in the same manner in which the vote of each province was fixed in the national legislature, the States General. General executive power was vested in a Council of Nineteen to which council each chamber delegated a fixed number. One of the Nineteen, however, was to be a representative of the States General. That body, too, required that nominations of principal colonial officers and their instructions be submitted to it for approval. There were other tie-ins also so that in effect the States General was allowing the company to run the western colonial empire subject to the right of the States General to intervene when it chose. In the case of New Netherland the Council of Nineteen delegated its executive power to the chamber of Amsterdam. Complaints from the colony against its local administrators, however, very frequently by-passed the company entirely to appeal to the States General. Such was the nature of public administration in 17th-century Netherlands. See Herbert L. Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth*

through Peter Stuyvesant, foreign relations problems were as difficult as in the homeland. The less serious of two great problems was that of Swedish encroachments on the company's Delaware River colony. Since the days of Gustavus Adolphus Sweden had fallen far. Thus, despite initial military success in the Delaware area, the Swedes were unable to hold out against the overpowering expedition which Stuyvesant dispatched against them in 1655. Sweden lost its American colony.

The English posed a more serious threat. In numbers they far exceeded the Dutch who, with roughly 3,000 people, nevertheless controlled the most desirable route of inland trade, the best harbor in the district, and an area, on Long Island at least, of good soils. Despite its less favorable situation, Massachusetts then supported 18,000 inhabitants. This was so because large numbers of aggressive, land-hungry people, driven by intolerable economic, political and religious conditions, had left England for new homes in America. On the other hand, few had been driven from the comparative prosperity and harmony existing within The Netherlands. Those who came to New Netherland were predominantly employees of the West India Company, adventurers, soldiers, merchants. Few came intending to till the soil. This comparative underpopulation, then, was the background of the English infiltration of New Netherland and a partial basis of the military insecurity under which New Netherland existed.

The infiltration might have been less a problem had the English accepted Dutch institutions of government. However, they more often succeeded in convincing the Dutch that the English governmental concepts were superior to those of the West India Company and its local autocrat. Given this discontent with the governmental institutions of New Netherland as well as the numerical preponderance of the English both north and south of New Netherland even the less astute observers might have predicted the eventual fate of the valley of the Hudson and its magnificent harbor.

Century (3 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1904–07), II, 95–98. This work is cited hereafter as Osgood, *17th Century*.

But if there were big problems in New Netherland there were also little ones. Finding the people "wild and loose in their morals,"[9] given to cheating, smuggling, fraud and the "clandestine sale of beer and brandy,"[10] Stuyvesant set about correcting them. Admonished, however, by his Holland superiors that "a tree grown too high . . . must be trimmed carefully," the governor permitted numerous qualifications to his Sunday prohibition law, banned only the opening of new taverns, required only that brawls be reported to him rather than that they be prevented by tavern keepers, and that all persons attend preaching from the word of God on Sunday in the afternoon as well as in the forenoon.[11]

Continuing the burst of legislation in what Oswald Garrison Villard referred to as "the first of many reform administrations the island of Manhattan has seen,"[12] the new Director improved fencing laws to cut down the damage to property by wandering stock, undertook construction of the Island's first pier, appointed official surveyors, made and enforced stringent fire-control laws, restricted trading privileges to those who had lived at least three years in the colony, levied an excise on imported wines and liquors to help pay for repairs to the fort and for the new pier, demonetized inferior or damaged sewant, cracked down on smuggling, tightened the laws against sale of intoxicants to Indians, and required employers of Indians to pay them promptly so that no grievances might arise on that score.

More important was Stuyvesant's agreement to permit the commonalty to elect eighteen men from whom he and his Council would select nine men (sometimes called the selectmen, sometimes merely the Nine Men) to confer with them on

[9] Letter to Stuyvesant from the Directors in Holland, April 7, 1648, in Edmund B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow (eds.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (15 vols.; Albany, 1856–87), XIV, 83. (The same letter contains the admonitions quoted just below.) This work is cited hereafter as *Doc. Rel.*

[10] Stokes, IV, 114.

[11] Berthold Fernow (ed.), *Records of New Amsterdam* (7 vols.; New York: The City of New York, 1897), I, 9. See also Stokes, IV, 110–114.

[12] Maud W. Goodwin, *et al.*, *Historic New York* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), 78. The many reforms are briefly noted in Stokes, IV, 150–54.

governmental problems as representatives of the commonalty. Provision was made for six of these Nine Men to retire annually and to be replaced by the Governor in Council from twelve nominated by the full board on the last day of each December. Young William Beekman was not included in the first group of Nine Men, but he was soon to figure in Stuyvesant's frustration of them.

For the first few years after his arrival William Beekman had concerned himself only with the conduct of his own affairs. He had come over either as a clerk in the West India Company or as a private trader.[13] In 1649 he designated himself "merchant" in the power of attorney by which he authorized the wife of a minister in Holland to collect money due to him from the West India Company for services aboard the *Princess*.[14] The nature of the services is unspecified; nor is it clear why, if he was in fact an employee of the company, he should have found it necessary to take this roundabout fashion of collecting money due him.

At the same time that he made the power of attorney, William made his first recorded real-estate investment. He bought part of a Manhattan lot near the Harlem River identified as having belonged to Isaac de Forrest.[15] The purpose of the purchase may be inferred from the fact that his marriage took place the next month, September 9, 1649. The young lady was Catalina de Boogh who had been born in Amsterdam but was then a resident of Albany where her father was, of course, a merchant. A breath of scandal was temporarily to mar their happiness a short time later, but if productivity be the test of a happy marriage their nine children would attest a life of bliss.

The Harlem "bouwery" or farm was home to William and his wife for two years. Their neighbor was the political martyr, Jochem Pietersen Kuyter, now relieved by action of the Dutch

[13] James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem, Its Origin and Early Annals* (New York: New Harlem, 1904), 161n. Riker says William came as a West India Company clerk, but became a merchant the next year after his arrival.

[14] Edmund B. O'Callaghan (ed.), *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State* (2 vols.; Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1865–66), I, 49. This work is cited hereafter as *Cal. Hist. Mss.*

[15] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, I, 47; Stokes, II, 375; IV, 110.

legislature of the sentence of exile imposed by Stuyvesant for his having dared protest the arbitrary rule of Kieft. In the first year of Beekman's residence in Harlem both he and Kuyter were threatened by the Indians, who had already murdered three farmers near the Hellgate, that their farms would be burned if they did not vacate.[16] This threat was apparently not carried out, but the next year William purchased the run-down but extensive plantation (seventy-six acres) of the former teacher, Jacobus van Corlaer, at Corlaer's Hook, much nearer the protection of the fort. Another possible reason for abandoning the Harlem "frontier" for a place nearer the provincial metropolis at the tip of Manhattan is suggested by the fact that William now permitted himself to be drawn into the political vortex which continually surrounded Peter Stuyvesant.

The political scene upon which William entered was complex as well as turbulent. The instructions of the Assembly of Nineteen, the executive body of the West India Company, had vested governmental authority at New Netherland in a "Supreme Council" which was to consist of three persons, the Director, Vice-Director, and Fiscal. In addition to this joint authority each of the three had separate duties conferred upon him by the terms of his commission from the company. Stuyvesant's conduct as Director established in fact a government which bore little resemblance to these instructions. In 1652 Fiscal Van Dyck, who had tasted Stuyvesant's discipline at Curacao on the voyage from Amsterdam,[17] charged that, in violation of these instructions, the Director "did not hesitate to transact a great deal of business in the name of the Director and Council without the Deputy's advice or mine, and in matters wherein I was recognized, which only seldom happened, his Honor was pleased frequently to burst into a violent rage both against the Deputy and me, if we in our advice did not fall in with his humor, scolding and berating us in open Court, in the hearing of all the contending parties and applicants both within and without the Council Chamber, as rogues and

[16] *Doc. Rel.*, I, 497.

[17] See note 4.

robbers of the Honorable Company, etc., threatening to beat and break us." Furthermore, Van Dyck alleged, the men appointed as additional council members were mere tools of Stuyvesant's who "must always conform to the humor of the Director, and say nothing else but Yes; otherwise the purse is closed, all favor missed and they get beaten in addition, if the Director's head be not well, or he be not sufficiently well pleased."[18]

As with the Council so with the Selectmen. In 1648 the petty autocrat had requested the Selectmen to lend a hand to finish the fort. Pointing to the company revenue from export duties, the beer excise and milling fees, these gentlemen suggested that those funds ought to make it possible for the company to complete its fort without further impoverishing the people. The result was that Stuyvesant, contrary to his instructions from the company, dismissed the board of Selectmen and replaced them with others "according to his whim and caprice."[19]

Among those so appointed was William Beekman whom Stuyvesant apparently expected to be fully compliant. Initially Stuyvesant was not disappointed. Rebuffed by the townspeople in his efforts to finish the fort, Stuyvesant had resorted to the company's slaves who had faced the outside of the fort with sod. However, "as the soil is sandy and the foundation weak, the sods mostly sagged and fell to pieces so that the inhabitants' swine damaged the fort, whereupon the Director ordered the soldiers to shoot whatever hogs came there." But in this potential crisis the Director softened and through William Beekman, "one of *his* Select Men, borrowed firewood here and there, with which the fort is now (fenced) off."[20] Thus inauspiciously did Beekman enter into public service.

The second incident in William's public career was scarcely more auspicious. An extract from the resolution of March 28,

[18] Stokes, VI, 90; IV, 125. See also *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, I, 56.

[19] As quoted by Van Dyck in his protests (see next paragraph) to the States General over his removal (*Doc. Rel.*, I, 499).

[20] *Ibid.*, 495–499. The italics are the author's, not Van Dyck's.

1652, which dismissed from his company office the confessed drunkard, Fiscal Van Dyck, states that the action was taken in the presence of the "Honorable Councillors and undersigned *invited* Select men." Instead of the full number of Nine Selectmen it would appear that the Director had chosen to invite only three, for there were appended the signatures of but three Selectmen. One of these was William Beekman.[21]

Reports of such abuses of power at New Netherland came often before the Dutch legislature in the early years of Stuyvesant's administration with the result that the West India Company in 1652 was compelled to grant some concessions to the complainants. Chief among these was the establishment of a separate municipal government for the town of New Amsterdam.[22] There was considerable discrepancy between the municipal government which the governor established for the town and that which the States General (legislature) had recommended, but the improvement was still impressive. There were to be two burgomasters and five schepens vested jointly with qualified legislative and judicial authority over the inhabitants of the town. Presumably the people were to elect a double number for these posts, *i.e.*, four burgomasters, ten schepens, and two for the executive office of schout. Then, as in the case of the Nine Men, before the annual retirement of half its members the board would make nominations twice the number of the expected vacancies. From these nominations appointments to fill the vacancies would be made by the Governor in Council. Interpreting his instructions freely, however, Stuyvesant named the burgomasters and schepens himself and determined, too, that there would not be a separate schout for New Amsterdam, but that the provincial schout, an adherent

[21] *Ibid.*, 510–511. Again the italics are the author's, not Van Dyck's. In apparent conflict with this story of Van Dyck's is that reported by Brodhead. He states that Van Dyck's removal was claimed to have been "by and with the consent of the Nine Men," but that they—impliedly nine of them—later declared that the "secretary had falsely appended . . . their names." See Brodhead, I, 532.

[22] A short account of this protest movement is given in Brodhead, I, 501–509. The interesting text of the Representation of Remonstrance may be seen in Jameson, *op. cit.*, 287 *ff.* and in *Doc. Rel.*, I, 271 *ff.* Jameson also presents the answer of Stuyvesant's agent. It is

of Stuyvesant's and a man widely hated, should serve for the town as well.[23]

In view of his service as one of Stuyvesant's "Nine Men" it is not surprising that William Beekman was appointed one of the five original schepens of New Amsterdam. The appointments were made by Stuyvesant's proclamation dated February 2, 1653, and on February 6 in the old tavern now rechristened City Hall ("Stadt Huys") occurred the first meeting of the first municipal government on the island of Manhattan. Because of the volume of legislative and judicial business, it was decided that the board of burgomasters and schepens should meet regularly each Monday morning at nine o'clock.[24]

The records of these meetings, in which Beekman participated regularly, show that on occasion he stepped down from the bench of magistrates to press a personal matter in litigation before the court. Usually these cases concerned rent which was due him from tenants, attachments on property to secure payment of debts due him, and other similarly mundane affairs.[25] On the legislative side Beekman's talents were put to more important work.

The first Anglo-Dutch War, then in progress, gave rise to considerable and not unwarranted anxiety on the part of the authorities at New Netherland over the prospect of attack by their overwhelmingly numerous English neighbors. Consequently "contributions" for the defense of the City were levied provisonally by the burgomasters and schepens on certain of the citizens, a fixed amount being set for each. These amounts ran from 50 to 200 florins, although 100, the amount of William's assessment, was the most common.[26]

On March 14, the day after the assessment, Beekman was elected with one other schepen to join the council member Montagne, designated by Stuyvesant, in supervising the work

interesting to note that an order, of doubtful legality, for Stuyvesant's recall was actually issued although soon countermanded. Brodhead, (I, 541–542) felt that had it not been for the Anglo-Dutch War which was then beginning Stuyvesant would have been forced out.

[23] See Brodhead, I, 548; Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, *History of New York in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), I, 328–329.

[24] Brodhead, I, 548–549.

[25] Fernow, *op. cit.*, I and II, *passim.*

[26] *Ibid.*, I, 66–67.

of fortifying the town. Specifications were set, contracts let, and palisades erected around a part of the town.[27]

Through the summer anxiety waned somewhat, it would appear, for at the end of July when the Governor called upon the municipal authorities for further aid in the work of fortification, they respectfully declined. On August 2 the burgomasters and schepens, feeling the desirability of public support, called in to meet with them several of the town's leading citizens. This group supported unanimously a declaration that, having already expended nearly double the amount of their original commitment, the citizens of the town should pay nothing more until the Director-General "surrenders the whole excise on wines and beer." This tax, paid into the coffers of the West India Company, had long irked the inhabitants. They now sought not repeal, but direct application of the revenue from the tax to the needs of the municipality. Were its revenues to prove inadequate for the completion of the fortifications, the informal assembly agreed to "consider measures to raise more."[28]

Stuyvesant refused to be coerced. Yet his tactics gave evidence that he deemed the movement too powerful to be dealt with at all harshly. No arbitrary changes were made in the composition of the city government; Stuyvesant even declined the request of the burgomasters and schepens that they be dismissed. He accumulated funds by suing the company's debtors at law before the court composed of the burgomasters and schepens themselves.[29]

Any who thought, however, that this action had reconciled the controversy between the Governor and the City authorities was soon to be surprised. On September 9, 1653, William Beekman and his colleagues on the board of burgomasters and schepens elected two of their number as delegates to a "General Assembly" alleged to have been called by the Director-General in Council.[30] The purpose of the Assembly was to discuss ways

[27] *Ibid.*, 69.
[28] *Ibid.*, 92.
[29] *Ibid.*, 103 *ff*. See also 128.
[30] *Ibid.*, 117. See also *Doc. Rel.*, XIV, 218–19.

and means of dealing with a group of pirates and horse-thieves which was causing great property loss to Long Islanders and others in the area. But the Assembly assumed a more revolutionary aspect when the representatives of some English towns urged that the payment of taxes to the company be stopped on the ground that no protection had been afforded the citizens against the robberies. It was also urged that New Amsterdam and the English towns form a protective alliance of their own.

Less revolutionary opinions prevailed, however, and it was decided to adjourn the Assembly until December 10 when other towns were to be invited to help frame a letter of protest to the Lords Directors in Holland. Stuyvesant was asked to summon this new meeting and apparently did so, although he was later to declare that he had merely been informed "in the most insulting manner possible" that the meeting would take place and that he "might do what he pleased and prevent what he could."[31]

Beekman had not been a delegate to the first assembly, but he did attend the new convention. It is not clear whether he sat as representative of the town of Brooklyn, as claimed by the historian of that community, or whether he was in attendance *ex officio* as schepen of New Amsterdam. In any case his signature is among the nineteen appended to the remonstrance which was issued by the convention.[32]

The question of the robberies now disappeared as the delegates took up more fundamental matters. The principal emphasis of the remonstrance which the delegates adopted related to "our apprehension of the establishment of an arbitrary government among us." The delegates humbly sub-

[31] *Doc. Rel.*, XIV, 239. See also Fernow, *op. cit.*, I, 131–132.

[32] Henry R. Stiles (ed.), *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and The City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683 to 1884* (Brooklyn: W. W. Munsell, 1884), I, 88. Stiles names three Brooklyn delegates although only two were authorized for that community. The text of the remonstrance is published in *Doc. Rel.*, I, 550–51. Here the order of signature indicates that Beekman signed with the rest of the burgomasters and schepens of New Amsterdam.

mitted that it was "one of our privileges that our consent or that of our representatives is necessarily required in the enactment of . . . law and orders." They were incensed, too, that officers and magistrates, however well qualified, were appointed "contrary to the laws of Netherland . . . and without the consent or nomination of people whom the matter most affects."[33]

A crisis impended. On December 12 the Governor's Council declared the Assembly illegal, on the grounds that it had exceeded the authority granted by the Director-General in Council. Next day the entire membership of the Assembly signed a petition asking an answer to the remonstrance and deriding the charge of illegality. On December 14 Stuyvesant repeated the assertion of illegality and ordered the delegates by their individual names "not to assemble any more but to separate under pain of our extreme displeasure and arbitrary correction."[34] The delegates backed down.

In January when the burgomasters and schepens petitioned the Director-General and Council to authorize them to nominate a double number from which the Director-General in Council might appoint new members to complete the board of burgomasters and schepens, the request was refused. Instead, the Director in Council made the appointments without nomination by the board.[35] It was undoubtedly no accident, however, that the two men appointed were quite acceptable to the board and to the community at large.

Stuyvesant's position was further strengthened when the Holland directors were heard from. They charged him specifically to "mete out due punishment for what had passed." To the New Amsterdam board of burgomasters and schepens they were equally firm. Reminding the board of the existence of war with England, the directors spoke of their action as "very much out of place." The members of the board were charged to "behave quietly and peacefully, to obey the authorities placed over you and by no means join with the English . . . in holding

[33] *Doc. Rel.*, I, 551–52.
[34] *Doc. Rel.*, I, 553; XIV, 232–38.
[35] *Doc. Rel.*, XIV, 244.

conventicles, either for the sake of deliberating affairs of state, which is not your business, or, which is still worse, to make changes in the province and its government."[36]

Punishment of the guilty parties might have been expected in view of this strong support from home, but Stuyvesant knew better. In view of the state of public opinion he and his council found it wiser to observe the maxim about sleeping dogs. On June 21, 1654, they passed a resolution "not to make further inquiries into what the burgomasters and schepens have done and not to make for the present any changes among them."[37]

There was significance to the qualification "for the present." At the next "election" of burgomasters and schepens no nominations were permitted. Instead the council "elected and chose" new burgomasters and schepens to replace those retiring. Those retiring were the five who had signed the remonstrance of 1653, including William Beekman. These men were now purged. The new board contained only those whom Stuyvesant and his council had appointed directly. The two hold-overs were those he had appointed the previous January.[38]

At the next election, 1656, the nomination of the double number was permitted. To Stuyvesant's consternation the purge victims led the list of nominees. Faced with this near defiance Stuyvesant decided to continue the present board with the addition of only two schepens. His appointees, whom he described as "reasonable and proper persons,"[39] included William Beekman. Thus, although Stuyvesant's government continued to be highly arbitrary, William Beekman, alone among the signers of the remonstrance, had been restored to grace.

The restoration was apparently not complete, however, for in 1657 when William was third-ranking candidate in the

[36] *Ibid.*, 262–266. The delegates had claimed, too, that "Natural Law" gave men the right to gather "for the welfare and protection of their freedom." Stuyvesant thought this required explanation. It appeared to him (p. 239) that "authorities are appointed for these purposes, but not all men generally for that would create confusion."

[37] *Ibid.*, 280.

[38] Fernow, *op. cit.*, I, 281.

[39] *Ibid.*, II, 25–30.

nominations for burgomaster, he did not receive the appointment. Next year, when his term as schepen expired, William and Van Cortlandt were both nominated for burgomaster with six votes each. There was some delay due to procedural haggling with Stuyvesant, but eventually Van Cortlandt received the appointment.[40] Beekman was out of public employment for the second time since 1652.

The vacation, if such it was, did not last long. The "election" of Van Cortlandt had occurred on February 2. On February 22 William was nominated with one other for Orphan Master, and on February 26 was appointed.[41] The man whom he replaced was the new burgomaster, Van Cortlandt. The job involved supervision of the administration of the property and effects of widows and orphans according to traditional Dutch practice. But Beekman was to gain little experience in the position, for on July 30 he was elevated to the command of the company colony on the Delaware River.[42]

William's political advancement occurred despite several embarrassing litigations of these years which might well have destroyed his career. The most trying of these concerned the reputation of his wife. This incident began when a poor sailor was observed distributing quantities of bread to the populace at large. When asked the source of his bounty, the sailor revealed that a woman had given him a sum of sewant (wampum) as hush money. He volunteered further that he had discovered the woman, who wore a wedding ring, "in the bush" with a man who was not her husband. Encouraged by an appreciative audience the sailor added that he himself had come with the woman from the "bush" to the "Fresh Water" and had had "such a kiss from her that I could scarcely compose myself."[43]

After considerable distortion by local gossip mongers the story at last reached William Beekman's ears with his wife and Cornelis Steenwyck, a rising figure in both the commerce and politics of New Amsterdam, identified as the central figures.

[40] *Ibid.*, 284, 319–325.
[41] *Ibid.*, 336, 341.
[42] *Doc. Rel.*, XII, 219.
[43] Fernow, *op. cit.*, II, 201. (See next note for full reference.)

William promptly began legal actions to halt the spread of this slander against his spouse. By hailing each of those who told the story into court William was able to trace it back through three confessed gossips to the mariner who was reported to have alleged that he had apprehended Steenwyck and Mrs. Beekman. He denied that he had so identified the parties, but the court record ends dramatically, if prematurely, with an order for "threatening of the preparation for, the Torture." That New Amsterdam was ripe for prosecution of its gossips is evident in that the first of those whom William brought into court was fined and compelled to apologize publicly for implicating another prominent citizen in a similarly unfounded tale.[44]

While the slander case was pending William got into trouble also with "revenooers." The board of burgomasters and schepens had passed regulations of an apparently ambiguous nature relating to the collection of a beer excise. The tax farmer appointed to collect this revenue promptly brought action against Burgomaster Van Cortlandt, Schepens Beekman and Vinge, and ex-Schepen Van Couwenhoven for non-compliance with this act. The non-brewers among the board members decided that what had happened was not wholly reprehensible but they decreed that the accused should be fined for refusing to pay an excise on what they had brewed and consumed within the short time since the enactment of the regulation. Beekman and the others, except Van Cortlandt, got off with the payment of eight florins or less. Van Cortlandt, who had refused even to permit the tax farmer to inspect his brewery, was fined 125 florins.[45]

Still a third litigation involved charges that William as a magistrate had appropriated public funds to finance his own gambling exploits. To stop this report William brought action against Madaleen Vincent alleging slander and verbal abuse. That such abuse had not been confined to one of the parties is

[44] *Ibid.*, 184, 200–201, 212, 221, 244, 249–50, 265, 275, 277, 281–282. The quotation is from p. 282; the last case referred to is on p. 277.

[45] *Ibid.*, 244–246, 250, 252–254.

suggested by Madaleen's counter-charge that William called her a "swine and a baggage," but the verdict was in William's favor. Madaleen was fined sixty guilders and ordered "not to misbehave any more towards the Magistrates."[46]

By 1658, when his court actions were concluded, William Beekman was a prosperous family-man of thirty-five. Although he was far less wealthy than many of his political confrères, he held properties at Corlaer's Hook and in Harlem as well as the land on which his house stood, the north side of the present site of Chatham Square. He was also a brewer, as were many of the town's leading citizens, and the proprietor of a flour mill. There were further indications of his standing in the community in that he was a slave-owner and a leader of the militia.[47] These interests and this position in New Amsterdam as well as his new post of Orphan Master William now abandoned in order to accept appointment as Vice-Director of the West India Company in charge of its colony on the Delaware River.[48] Perhaps his experiences in New Amsterdam's court helped him to bear with equanimity the prospect of departing for less civilized country.

The task which now confronted William Beekman was complicated by the remarkable propensity exhibited by the Dutch in this period for devising peculiar administrative arrangements. In 1657, two years after the conquest of the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, the impoverished West India Company had induced the city of Amsterdam to accept a portion of the territory in payment of a debt. Consequently the rich alluvial area south of the Christina River and of the present site of Wilmington became the colony of the city of Amsterdam; its capital lay in the hamlet of New Amstel. The area to the north, less fertile and more hilly, remained in the possession of the West India Company; its largely Swedish and Finnish population looked to the village of Altena and to William Beekman for whatever government was needed or

[46] *Ibid.*, 290.

[47] Stokes, IV, 169 (land), 173 (brewer), 136 (militia leader); Fernow, *op. cit.*, I, 414 (miller); *Doc. Rel.*, II, 31 (slave-owner).

[48] *Doc. Rel.*, XII, 220.

could be imposed.[49] Unfortunately there were two agreements providing for the division of the territory. One gave the City of Amsterdam complete control in its area. The other clearly gave the city complete judicial authority, but specified that "sovereignty and supreme authority" for the area should remain in the States General *and in the Company*.[50]

In accordance with this latter "agreement" William's instructions from Stuyvesant and his Council stated quite clearly that he was expected to be at New Amstel to act as customs inspector and collector for the company whenever ships arrived from overseas. To carry out this duty William was empowered to make arrests, confiscate goods, institute legal actions in the court of Amsterdam's colony and appeal decisions at his discretion apparently to New Amsterdam.

In the company's territory William's authority was much stronger. He was given "highest authority over the Honorable Company's officers . . . also over the free men." His judicial jurisdiction included civil and military cases as well as criminal cases "of minor degree." He was further to be responsible for all company property in the area, military as well as civilian. There was no municipal government comparable to that which existed in New Amsterdam and in the city's colony at New Amstel. William and his subordinates at Altena constituted that area's only government.[51]

All things considered William's job was indeed difficult. The inhabitants were largely foreigners only recently conquered. There was constant apprehension that a military expedition would be dispatched by the Swedish government to reconquer the region. The poorly defined administrative relationship between the company and the Amsterdam colony led to increasingly strained relations between Beekman and the officials at New Amstel. There was the constant frontier problem of

[49] Jeanette Eckman, "Life Among the Early Dutch at New Castle," *Delaware History, New Castle Tercentenary Issue, 1651–1951*, IV (June, 1951), 246–302.

[50] Christopher Ward, *The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware, 1609–1694* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), 253. This popular but reliable book has a brief and witty chapter (XLIV), "Of a Political Problem," which discusses the jurisdictional confusion on the Delaware.

[51] *Doc. Rel.*, XIII, 307.

maintaining pacific relations with the Indians, and perhaps most important of all there was the problem of the numerous and aggressive English in Maryland who claimed title to the whole area.

With the Swedes and Finns, some eighty families near Altena, there was less difficulty than one might have expected. On Stuyvesant's instructions William retained Swedish incumbents in the offices subordinate to him and they got on well together. The Swedish sheriff was removed in 1661 by action of Stuyvesant and his Council, but only as an economy measure. William assumed the sheriff's duties. There was apparently some emigration to Maryland and to Manhattan, but it seems to have constituted no major exodus and to have come more from New Amstel than from Altena. Discontent with Beekman's judicial decisions was manifested by some, but it was more individual than general. In such cases he usually passed the buck to Stuyvesant.[52]

On religious matters the Lutheran Swedes and the Calvinist Dutch found it more difficult to avoid controversy. When Beekman fined a Lutheran priest fifty guilders for marrying a young couple without proclamation in church and against the will of the parents, he did so despite the contention that such matters were rightfully within the province of the Swedish church.[53]

Again in the case of the unfortunate Swedish Domine Laers Carelsen religious differences caused complications. In a furious search for his runaway wife the domine broke in the door of her paramour's abode only to find that the couple had escaped by canoe to Maryland. While he undoubtedly sympathized with the anguished minister, William was also concerned over the damage inflicted upon the home of the seducer who had been considerably in debt to both William Beekman and the West India Company. Most disquieting to William, however, was the domine's impatience with Calvinist restraints upon his urge to remarry. Beekman had granted him a divorce im-

[52] *Ibid.*, *passim*. See also Ward, *op. cit.*, *passim*; and Eckman, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

[53] *Doc. Rel.*, XII, 307.

mediately after his wife's departure, but the action was subject to the approval of the authorities at New Amsterdam. Before such approval had been received the resourceful minister took a young girl to wife in a ceremony which he himself performed. This procedure, he insisted, was quite in conformance with the Lutheran creed, but it severely offended William Beekman. He declared the marriage illegal and the divorce not final. He fined the domine substantially, unfrocked him and with less apparent justification ordered him to assume the debts owed by his former wife's seducer to William Beekman and the West India Company. Later the divorce and remarriage were approved and the domine was restored to his pulpit.[54]

A more severe strain on William's religious opinions occurred when there arrived at Altena a Quaker refugee from Maryland. Reporting the incident to Stuyvesant and the Council, William stated:

> He is a quaker, showing not the least respect upon his arrival; leaving our house he said as excuse, that he knew very well, it was proper to show some respect, but, said he, his conscience did not allow it, whereupon I answered, that our conscience could not tolerate such a persuasion or sect. If he keeps still and no more followers of that sort shall arrive, I shall tolerate him until your Honor's further orders, but in case of increase I shall make him leave our jurisdiction pursuant to the praiseworthy orders made by your Honorable Worships.[55]

Heavier in demands upon William's time than problems of religion were those of drunkenness. These seem to have reached some kind of climax in November 1659. In New Amstel a drunken corporal accused of wife-beating was charged with attacking and abusing the lieutenant who arrested him. William journeyed to New Amstel to plead for leniency at the trial of this individual, but upon returning to Altena he found "most of our soldiers intoxicated." A few days later complaints came to him of the great noise made "after evening" by drunken savages. He dispatched a sergeant and three men to dispel the revellers, but the force was inadequate to make arrests. The Indians went off into the woods, but returned later

[54] *Ibid.*, 355, 366.

[55] *Ibid.*, 336.

to steal a blanket and a musket, the latter belonging to the company.[56]

Most of the responsibility for this evil William assigned to Jan Becker, dispenser of intoxicants. Becker not only incited the soldiers to drunkeness, but advanced them credit to make it possible. He held claims in some cases for two or three months wages in advance. In other cases he took bonds "wherein is set forth, that he had advanced such a sum for the necessaries of life."[57] As a consequence of this liberal credit policy there was excessive singing and boisterousness about the fort late at night and many of the soldiers became engaged in quarrels, but more seriously an Indian canoe had been burned by two drunken soldiers. In retaliation the Indians threatened to burn a house or kill cattle of the Christians, but William forestalled this by reimbursing them at once.[58]

Another serious incident arose when an Indian was found dead in the woods with a small amount of Becker's product remaining unconsumed beside him. Suspecting poison the natives had threatened to kill the manufacturer. They were reconciled and continued patronage only upon the assurance of another white man that he had passed much time the previous day in drinking with the dead man and from the same container. Mollified, the Indians suspended the body of the deceased on four great prongs opposite Becker's house; some said this was to curse the seller, but others said it was done merely because the deceased was not worthy of burial in view of the manner of his demise.[59]

The sale of intoxicants to Indians had, of course, been forbidden long before. Even the practices of Becker in encouraging intoxication among the soldiers had been ordered stopped, but both continued. Savages, Beekman reported to New Amsterdam, were even to be seen drinking publicly in taverns. Many were seen drunk every day so that in entertaining a visitor from Virginia, William was quite embarrassed at the numbers of intoxicated savages to be seen from the window by which they

[56] *Ibid.*, 282–283.
[57] *Ibid.*, 290–291.
[58] *Idem.*
[59] *Idem.*

sat. Concluding his report to Stuyvesant on the subject of Becker, William observed in understatement, "If your Honor required him at another place, I can . . . miss him here very well."[60] Brought to trial for his misdeeds, Becker was fined 500 guilders and ordered to leave Altena. The fine was later remitted, apparently because of his compliance with the second portion of the sentence.[61]

The seriousness of Becker's offense in selling liquor to Indians and the soldiers arose from the possibility that intoxication might lead to some incident which would touch off a general Indian war. Such wars had devastated New Netherland in 1642–1643, had nearly overcome New Amsterdam in 1655, and were to decimate Esopus (Kingston) a short time later. For this reason one can imagine the excitement with which William wrote to Stuyvesant: "General: Yesterday the savages reported here, that two dead savages had been found by them in the under-brushes or marshy place near New Amstel, who are said to have been murdered by Christians; therefore the savages are very dissatisfied and threaten those of New Amstel."[62]

On returning from a visit to New Amstel nearly two weeks later, William indicated that two white men had been arrested for the murder. The settlers nevertheless expected retaliatory action by the Indians and in consequence those from outlying regions had abandoned their homes and were staying in houses near the fort. There was evidence of great anxiety among these people over the failure or refusal of the local authorities at New Amstel to take action to prevent war. William was deeply concerned. With several Swedish leaders, better known and respected by the Indians than the Dutch, William soon journeyed to New Amstel where their mediation helped produce an agreement which in conjunction with gifts appeared to satisfy the Indians.[63]

The Christians had no monopoly on murder. On the 17th of November, 1662, for example, a young white man was mur-

[60] *Ibid.*, 318, 291.
[61] *Ibid.*, 341–343.
[62] *Ibid.*, 292.
[63] *Ibid.*, 292–298.

dered by an Indian within 400 yards of the fort at Altena. By the 5th of December the chiefs of one of the nearby tribes had arrived in Altena to acknowledge that the murderer belonged to their tribe and to do what they could to make amends. Protesting their long friendship for the Christians, the chiefs reminded Beekman of their own forebearance in the case reported just above. As William recounted the interview to Stuyvesant, "We had intended to read to them the punishment for murder according to our laws, but were afraid they would make us blush by pointing out, that at New Amstel the murderers were not punished; therefore we omitted it, recommending besides to them, to exert all their power and admonish these savages, that in future such things must not happen again." Approximately equal value was returned to the chiefs for the 110 pounds of elkskin which they had brought as a gift.[64]

On a lower level than these diplomatic duties were William's routine tasks in keeping his garrison supplied and in looking out for company property in the area. His letters are full of warnings to Stuyvesant that rations for the garrison were running out or that there were other imperative needs. In April 1660 he reported, "Some of our soldiers are altogether without shirts; I request your Honor will please and send some, also some socks and shoes."[65]

Of the property under William's care perhaps the horses provided the most trouble. At first William loaned them to farmers but he found that they worked the animals so hard as to prevent there being any natural increase. In the spring of 1660 William concluded that the company horses were too small for farm work. He hoped, however, to keep them through the coming season, when they would be much needed, and then to sell them. If he were not to be authorized to sell them, William wanted Stuyvesant to inform him early enough so that he could provide winter fodder for them. In June he reported that their health was good, but that according to the Indians two company horses had been running wild in the forest for about two years. William declared his intention of

[64] *Ibid.*, 419.

[65] *Ibid.*, 307, 316, 325, 353.

dispatching one savage, two or three soldiers, two tame horses, and one Swede to bring them back. In December William triumphantly announced the sale of all the remaining horses. Not only had he rid himself of the problem of their care, but he had secured through their sale "fattened cattle, fat hogs and a lot of bread stuff, so that our store is amply provided for a year with bacon and meat."[66]

Providing for his family at Altena proved almost as difficult for William as providing for the garrison. His salary was the same as that of the man whom he had replaced—fifty guilders per month plus 200 guilders per year as a subsistence allowance. He was provided a dwelling in Altena and was authorized to rent another in New Amstel at company expense for the periods when his duties would require him to stay there. Yet after little more than a year in his new post he complained that "everything here is very dear for the sustenance of a large family." To ease his burden he asked that a cadet's salary be paid his eldest son.[67]

Half a year later, his request ungranted, William suggested that as he was giving up renting a house in New Amstel the 155 guilders formerly paid to the colony there for rent should now be sent to him, "as I am quite destitute." Whether this was done or not, William continued to feel hard pressed. Scarcely four months later he petitioned formally for cadet's pay for his son in order to "diminish thus the petitioner's expenses" which were both many and great. This time his request was granted and we hear no more of personal financial difficulties until the termination of his job in 1663.[68]

But there were other unpleasant aspects of William's life at New Amstel. There were epidemics and inadequate medical attention. William himself was severely ill twice in 1659. Furthermore, there was virtually nothing available in Altena; everything had to be ordered from New Amsterdam. In the summer of 1660 Mrs. Beekman escaped the monotony of a shopping-less existence by going to New Amsterdam "for some

[66] *Ibid.*, 331, also 299, 311, 315.
[67] *Ibid.*, 291.
[68] *Ibid.*, 319, 329.

needed provisions and other necessaries for the family." The Director-General was requested to provide her with 150 guilders in beavers and 200 guilders in wampum to make her expedition a success. William, too, made a trip to New Amsterdam that fall in order to make arrangements for sending two of his boys to school and to "bring a little order" in his own affairs which had been left in quite an unsettled state because of his illness at the time of his departure in 1658. Back in Altena for the winter, William found occasion to regret to Stuyvesant also that no proper Christian baptism was obtainable there for his new-born son.[69]

Disagreeable as were so many aspects of William's life at Altena, there were circumstances which could make that hamlet seem a haven of relief. In particular these arose from the unfortunate necessity of cooperating at times with the obstreperous officials of New Amstel. In charge at that capital at the time of William's appointment was Jacob Alrichs, a sickly, meticulous man, obsequious to his superiors, overbearing and exacting toward his subordinates and toward the populace in general. If there was anyone in the area less liked than he it was his first assistant and successor, Lieutenant Alexander d'Hinoyossa, fiercely ambitious, almost insanely jealous of his prerogatives, even more harsh than Alrichs toward the inhabitants. Had there been any chance of William's maintaining harmonious relations with these men it would have lain in clearly differentiated powers, duties, and prerogatives for each of the two governments. Such, as we have seen, did not exist. As a consequence William's tenure of office on the Delaware was marked by a constant struggle for power in which William and Stuyvesant, the source of Beekman's power, were gradually beaten back by the officials of New Amstel. The fundamental reason for their defeat was that the West India Company instead of backing its own agents habitually chose to support the people at New Amstel. The reason for such supine conduct on the part of the company became apparent in 1663 when, on

[69] *Ibid.*, 256, 287–89, 321, 256, 299, 319, 328–329, 335. That Mrs. Beekman took a trip to New Amsterdam prior to this one is implied on p. 256.

the eve of the English conquest, it sold the rest of its unproductive Delaware territory to the wealthy but unwary City of Amsterdam. Meanwhile, however, William suffered.

Alrichs' displeasure with Beekman seems to have begun before they had even met. Before Beekman's appointment Alrichs had been discharging at least some of the duties related to the company's regulations on trade. Thus one evening before the arrival of Beekman he had taken up the pass, as was customary, of a skipper engaged in the coastal trade who had just come in to New Amstel. Next morning the skipper appeared before Alrichs and demanded, "You must give me the pass because the Honorable Mr. Beekman has come, who is our chief." Considerably irritated, Alrichs replied, "We reside here too, Mr. Beekman can find the pass here or it shall be sent to him directly." In reporting the incident to Stuyvesant, Alrichs found it expedient by way of apology to assert that Beekman "had not to wait for it for a quarter of an hour." Any inconvenience, he concluded, was to be blamed on the unreasonable conduct of the skipper.[70]

In the same letter to Stuyvesant Alrichs wrote querulously about the same captain's having shown him no pass at all on the next trip from New Amsterdam. He had heard it reported, Alrichs said, that the captain had been compelled to promise in writing at New Amsterdam to deliver his pass to no one else but Beekman. On the strength of this report Alrichs had let the man alone although he added complaints that private vessels were sometimes there eight to ten hours before Mr. Beekman arrived to inquire after their cargoes.

Despite such initial feelings of antagonism, which William intensified by recruiting soliders for Altena among the debtor inhabitants of New Amstel, Alrichs, Hinoyossa and Beekman were able to work together satisfactorily on one early endeavor. This was a land-purchase from the Indians in accordance with the terms of William's instructions from Stuyvesant. The company had determined to grant to the City of Amsterdam another territory called "Horekil" south of New Amstel from

[70] *Ibid.*, 238.

what is now called Bombay Hook to the mouth of the bay at Cape Henlopen. In order to make this grant with a clear title, the company ordered that the area be purchased from its "lawful owners," whoever they might prove to be. Stuyvesant had instructed Beekman to make the purchase in cooperation with Alrichs as representative of Amsterdam.[71]

Alrichs delegated his responsibility in the matter to Hinoyossa and in company with that officer and a body of soldiers William set off for the Horekil on April 23, 1659, amidst ominous rumors of claims by the English to the whole Delaware area. On the scene a savage was dispatched into the interior to summon the local chiefs to deal. Yielding to the lure of such profferred treasures as duffels, coats, kettles, looking-glasses, knives, and trumpets the local realtors consented to the transaction and by mid-June Beekman was able to send Stuyvesant a complete bill of sale.[72]

Hard on the conclusion of this contract the rumors about the English began to materialize. A delegation from Maryland or Virginia was coming to press the English claim. Beekman and the others fully realized, of course, that anything much larger than a delegation could have captured their territory. Rumors, too, of another Anglo-Dutch War made such a capture seem anything but unlikely. Finally on September 6 Colonel Utie arrived in New Amstel from Maryland with a party of six or seven. On the 8th he had an interview with Alrichs to which that gentleman also invited Beekman. As the representative of Amsterdam, Alrichs was eager to place upon Beekman, the West India Company agent, the responsibility for proving that the company had had an unencumbered title to the land which it had sold to the City of Amsterdam. If the territory were lost by reason of an imperfect title, Amsterdam wanted reimbursement from the company for its loss.

As Beekman reported the meeting to Stuyvesant, the bold Colonel Utie informed his hearers "that the country settled and held in possession by us here at the South River, was under

[71] *Ibid.*, 241, 221.

[72] *Ibid.*, 230, 242–243. Duffles were coarse woolen cloths with thick nap.

Lord Baltemoor's jurisdiction and therefore he ordered us to remove immediately or to declare ourselves subjects of this Mr. Baltemoor and if we would not decide upon it willingly, he should hold himself innocent of the harmless blood, which might be spilt hereby." The Colonel quite unreasonably desired to have an answer immediately as to whether or not they would acknowledge Maryland authority. At length he "granted" them three weeks in which to consult Stuyvesant.[73]

Next day Utie learned that Beekman was the commander at Altena and made the same demands to him. William told him that any remarks to be directed to him as commander at Altena should be addressed to him at that place, but Utie replied, "I consider to be sufficient, what I have ordered here."[74]

As a postscript to his account William reminded Stuyvesant that his garrison now numbered thirteen men and a sergeant. His request to the Swedes to furnish eight to ten volunteers for the defense of the fort, not yet answered when he wrote this, was later declined on the ground of an alleged previous promise of William's that they need "not stir in case of war, but only assist us against the savages." In view of his previous declaration to Stuyvesant that in case of difficulty he expected his Swedish subordinates to prove "more cumbersome than useful," William could not have been greatly disappointed.[75]

Woeful as was William's defensive position, that of New Amstel seemed even worse. Stuyvesant wrote the Holland directors at this time that there were scarcely thirty families left in all New Amstel so heavy had been the emigration to Maryland, Virginia and other places. Furthermore, of the fifty soldiers originally sent out, only about half were left. Most of these were stationed at the Horekil where they were under constant threat of massacre by the Indians. Eight or ten remained in New Amstel.[76]

Nevertheless William was optimistic. Writing from New Amstel where he had just conferred with Alrichs and Hinoyossa, William told Stuyvesant on September 21 that those two

[73] *Ibid.*, 252.
[74] *Ibid.*, 253.
[75] *Ibid.*, 264, 258.
[76] *Ibid.*, 254.

seemed "much disturbed and afraid of the English and they fancy, that they will come shortly and surprise them." For his part, said William, "I cannot imagine this at all, for Maryland is not of such a capacity, to keep large garrisons. The more I think of the affair, the less difficulty can I find, but we cannot know, what arrogant people may do." He awaited Stuyvesant's advice and orders.[77]

Those orders blistered when they came. Addressed to Alrichs and to Beekman the Director's letter damned unmercifully their "frivolous and stupid answer" to the "threatening utterances" of the inadequately accredited Colonel Utie. Stuyvesant was equally angry that they had permitted Utie to spy and to "sow his mutinous and seditious seed among the community . . . for 4 or 5 days," and outraged that they had formally promised in a written instrument signed by the full council to give a "further and better answer to his trifling demand within the time of three weeks." Indicating the extent of the General's displeasure, too, were the commissions accompanying Captain Martin Crieger and Cornelis Van Ruyven who were now sent to the area. Crieger was placed in full military command and together the two were to "put in order the policy and protection of these places."[78] Alrichs and Beekman, in other words, were temporarily deprived of their military authority.

The major share of responsibility for the acts which had raised the Director General's ire belonged to Alrichs. It was his territory to which Utie came. Beekman's presence was at Alrichs' pressing invitation, but merely by his presence he acquired some measure of responsibility for the decisions which were taken.[79] Fortunately, William's prediction of no action by the Marylanders proved correct, and the situation soon returned to normal.

Four months later "normalcy" was again disturbed. The cause was the death of Alrichs which brought to power the fiercely ambitious Lieutenant Hinoyossa. He was determined to

[77] *Ibid.*, 258.
[78] *Ibid.*, 260.
[79] *Ibid.*, 252. For William's excuses, see 264.

stamp out every vestige of power exercised by Beekman or by Stuyvesant over the hamlet which was his charge. Stuyvesant pulled no punches in reporting to the directors of the West India Company, December 9, 1660, on Hinoyossa's conduct:

> The affairs of the City's Colony on the South river are not managed as they ought to be. Lieutenant d'Hinoyossa, who claims the supreme command there and makes himself master of everything, shows himself to be led by a haughty and insolent character, having no other aim, if we can rely upon verbal and written information, and doing nothing else, than defaming and slandering the late Director Alrichs and undermining and ruining the property and the heirs of the same, while he pays little or no attention to the just orders and mandamus, which have been obtained by the Administrators and Executors of the estate from time to time and issued by us for the maintenance of proper justice.[80]

William himself was equally frank when he wrote to Stuyvesant about Hinoyossa's reception of the news that the City of Amsterdam had decided to keep him in command of its colony:

> D'Hinoyossa feels himself quite big again, he wants to get back into his hands all property of the late Mr. Alrichs, he begins to turn the tables again. Ten or twelve days ago he removed the Secretary van Nas from his office, because he did not write the records to please him (so they say), also because he had given advice to some people against his person.
>
> He also informed several, that if they should again speak ill of his "Majesty" at Foppe Janssen or elsewhere in a tavern, he should punish them with heavy fines. He further summoned Fop Jansen before the meeting and recommended him, that if anything bad was spoken of the "little prince," he should caution the people . . . for he did not intend to let himself be abused in that manner, even not by those at the Manhattans with their mandamus, as the farmers say, his Honor had repeated this at different times.[81]

Branching out from the fields of justice and civil rights Hinoyossa soon was denying the power of William and hence of the West India Company to regulate foreign trade and to collect customs duties. He demanded that skippers present invoices to him, dip their flags in passing his fort, grant him the right to search their vessels when he chose.

[80] *Ibid.*, 332, 289.

[81] *Ibid.*, 335.

Sworn statements were also presented to Stuyvesant indicating that Hinoyossa had publicly called the Director-General and all the people of Manhattan his enemies, "even his enemies unto death." Further, it was attested he had sprinkled a little wine about the tavern floor saying, "If I could poison them with so much wine, . . . I would not take a spoonful to do it." As a climax to his threats he promised that as Peter Minuit when maltreated by the company had brought the Swedes to take over the Delaware, so would he, if not properly sustained by the City, "fetch here the English or them from Portugal, the Swede or the Dane, what the devil do I care, whom I serve."[82]

From incident to incident relations between Beekman and Hinoyossa and between Stuyvesant and Hinoyossa went from bad to worse. One climax arose when Hinoyossa's sheriff mistakenly shot and killed one of the company's soldiers. Months of argument ensued as Stuyvesant and Beekman insisted that the sheriff should be brought to trial and Hinoyossa refused to permit it. Ultimately the directors of the company, after examining mountains of affidavits on the subject, found that the shooting had been done "only in self-defense and ex-officio." They ordered that the sheriff be reinstated without a trial.[83]

Meanwhile Stuyvesant had dispatched a mediator to try to reconcile Hinoyossa and Beekman. This man reported that the depth of Hinoyossa's hatred for Beekman made any friendship between them impossible. Beekman he found to be, as Stuyvesant and others had described him, "an honest and polite man, wherefore we have become very intimate with each other." This, he said, made Hinoyossa even more jealous, but Beekman "behaves himself in every respect as an honest man ought to."[84]

Encouraged by success, Hinoyossa grew bolder. He openly insulted and defied Beekman. He went almost as far with Stuyvesant directly and William suspected that he had begun to appropriate government funds for his own use. In all this he

[82] *Ibid.*, 376, 352.
[83] *Ibid.*, 424.
[84] *Ibid.*, 397.

was protected by the fact that the West India Company desired most ardently to sell the rest of its unprofitable Delaware territory to the unsuspecting City of Amsterdam. Negotiations for this sale were frequently mentioned to Stuyvesant and at length the company directors told him quite bluntly to conduct himself in such a manner that "the Honorable Administration of this City [Amsterdam] may have no reasons to become prejudiced against the Company's Administration in New Netherland, which, as your Honors ought to know cannot be advantageous for it."[85]

In the spring of 1663 it was made known publicly that the "Lords-Burgomasters [of Amsterdam] were in negotiation with the Honorable Company to acquire the whole river for their Honors' colony and that the result was to be expected by the next opportunity." Immediately Beekman asked Stuyvesant "please to employ and continue me somewhere else in the [company's] service." Through the summer of uncertainty as to the outcome of the negotiations William's letters repeated his request. The arrangements were finally completed in Holland late in September. The news arrived in New Amstel on December 3; it was borne by Hinoyossa himself who was returning from a brief visit to Holland.[86]

But William was not informed at once. Instead Hinoyossa waited until William arrived the next evening with two or three soldiers to make his customary inspection of the newly arrived ship. Then Hinoyossa sent a council member to tell William to send no soldiers on board. Having thus publicly humiliated his rival, Hinoyossa then informed him of the completion of the transfer and of the elimination of his position.[87]

That night, while he was still at New Amstel, there came to William reports that Hinoyossa had determined not to permit him to remain at Altena for the rest of the winter. Before leaving for home the next morning William dashed off an appeal to Stuyvesant to remind him of the "impossibility

[85] *Ibid.*, 396, 422, 428.
[86] *Ibid.*, 431, 434, 435.
[87] *Ibid.*, 447.

to leave here with my great family during the winter and move elsewhere, without having any cattle for assistance. Your Honorable Worship will please to induce him to make such an agreement, that I might remain in my lodgings until a more convenient time." Meanwhile he hoped another assignment could be found for him.[88]

The messenger bearing communications to New Amsterdam had been expected to leave New Amstel by water, but having chosen instead to go by land he arrived at Altena close behind William himself. William took the opportunity to append a revealing post script to the letter he had composed that morning:

> Sir! I have opened this again to write the following. It is this, that I am afraid, I shall not be able to maintain myself with my large and expensive family, living as freeman at the Manhatans; in case your Honorable Worship should have no occasion to continue me, which I however desire earnestly, because I would not like to leave my nation, I have therefore resolved to remove to the upper part of Maryland in Augustyn Heermans' neighborhood. I cannot make up my mind to remain here on the River as freeman, for I would have no rest from d'Hinoyossa, wherefore I humbly ask your Honorable Worship to provide for me as a father and give me a favorable advice.[89]

More magnanimous than had been expected, Hinoyossa now proposed to William through an intermediary that he "take some valleys" near Fort Altena for cultivation. Should this be done Hinoyossa offered to provide five or six laborers. However, William declined. He thought it would take several years to make such a venture profitable and he was further discouraged by the determination of the Amsterdam colony to monopolize for itself the trade with the English and with the Indians. If these were insufficient reasons there was still the subordination to Hinoyossa. "If one wants to beat the dog," said William, "a stick is easily found." Not having seen or spoken to Hinoyossa since that individual's return from Holland, William saw no reason to abate his suspicions. Were

[88] *Ibid.*, 448.

[89] *Idem.*

there no post for him elsewhere in the service of the West India Company he would move to Maryland.[90]

But Maryland was not to be for William Beekman. Hinoyossa personally offered to grant William his present abode as a gift if he would accept the previous proposal to establish a large bouwerie. It was made clear, furthermore, that Hinoyossa had been ordered by the Lords Burgomasters in Holland to persuade Beekman to remain. Hinoyossa's Council members assured Beekman of their own and Hinoyossa's friendship. Stuyvesant interceded with Hinoyossa in William's behalf and expressed at the same time "great willingness" to re-employ him. William chose to wait for the re-employment opportunity and the next summer he received appointment as the company's commissary at Esopus.[91]

Esopus was a younger community than that which William left. Its first known settler was an Englishman named Thomas Chambers. In 1652 or 1653 he had purchased from the Indians a tract of land at the Hudson River terminus of an Indian trail from the Delaware headwaters. The settlement grew slowly due to recurrent difficulties with the Indians. But by 1660 the community supported an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and was gaining in its contest with Stuyvesant over the right to establish local government.[92]

The chief zealot in the cause of local government was Roeloff Swartwout. Journeying to Holland at his own expense, this young man convinced the company directors both that his community deserved a separate local government and that he should be its schout. Orders to that effect were issued April 15, 1660, but it was another year before Stuyvesant, who deprecated the administrative capacity of the community in general and of Swartwout in particular could be brought into line.

The government established was similar to that of New

[90] *Ibid.*, 449–451.

[91] *Ibid.*, 452.

[92] Augustus H. Van Buren, *A History of Ulster County Under the Dutch* (Kingston, 1923), *passim*. See also Marius Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston from its Early Settlement to the Year 1820* (New York: Burr Printing House, 1888), 1–63.

Amsterdam, if the burgomasters be omitted. The schepens were to be "elected" by Stuyvesant and his council from the traditional double number nominated by the incumbents. However, the government had little opportunity to function, for in June of 1663 there began the Second Esopus War against the Indians. Despite an initial surprise massacre in which twenty-one Christians lost their lives, the Indians were roundly beaten and their power in the area destroyed before peace was concluded by Stuyvesant the following spring. Swartwout, once deposed for incompetence and arrogance, now recovered his position only to be deposed again within three months because of the appointment of William Beekman.

Appointed July 4, 1664, as a "more immediate representative of the West India Company," William had jurisdiction over the entire area between the Jurisdictions of Fort Amsterdam and Fort Orange (Albany).[93] On July 17 the Director-General and Council ordered that all sloops passing down the river travel in twos and be "properly manned" to hold off Indian attack. All sloops whether going up river or down, were to stop at Esopus "to demand a pass from Commissary Beekman as a proof that this, our Order, has been obeyed."[94]

Less than two months from the day of William's appointment, Stuyvesant surrendered New Amsterdam to the forces of the Duke of York. Accordingly William summoned an extraordinary session of the court of schepens "to consider what should be done if the English come."[95] At the conference it was decided that if the English were sighted a cannon should be fired to summon all the militia to repair to the guardhouse to receive further orders. Meanwhile William and the justices would advance beyond the gate to attempt to hold a conference with the English leaders. With this plan agreed upon, it was ordered that the militia officers should scour the town

[93] Schoonmaker, *op. cit.*, 47; Van Buren, *op. cit.*, 85.

[94] Edmund B. O'Callaghan (ed.), *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland 1638–1674* (Albany: Weed and Parson, 1868), 465.

[95] Nathaniel B. Sylvester, *History of Ulster County* (Philadelphia: Everts and Pack, 1880), 64.

for powder and lead, "for we cannot learn how the Indians will act in this situation."[96] Before the end of the month, whether by the agreed procedure or otherwise, the town was surrendered to the English who were returning down the river after having taken Fort Orange.

The conquering English retained William in office, but his functions diminished. All civil government in the area was subordinate to the commander of the occupying military forces for the next five years. During this period William once journeyed to New York with another local leader to seek a supply of blankets to help the poor citizens in the duty of providing adequate quarters for the troops.[97] Also when one of the inhabitants was killed in a riot protesting the conduct of the military commander, William sent Governor Nicolls a statement of the facts.[98] The cogency of Beekman's statement is attested by the fact that Nicolls removed the military commander whom he found guilty of refusal to obey the order of the Schout (Beekman) and Commissaries to release a brewer who had been arbitrarily imprisoned.[99]

When Francis Lovelace became governor in 1668, he took steps at once to eliminate the garrison, although it was not finally done away with until September 1669. Meanwhile William and his subordinates were instructed to "take care for the quartering" of the troops, "to live friendly and peaceably with them and to assist them in what conveniently you can toward their planting the New Town" nearby.[100] Then in September, 1669, the governor withdrew the garrison and established a seven-man commission, presided over by an Englishman, but including William Beekman, "to examine into and to regulate the affairs . . . according to such instructions as I shall herewith give . . . ." The primary reason ad-

[96] *Ibid.*, 64.

[97] *Idem.*

[98] Ulster Historical Society, *Collections* (Kingston: Hammel and Louisberry, 1860), I, 50.

[99] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 149–150.

[100] Victor H. Paltsits (ed.), *Minutes of the Executive Council of the Province of New York, Administration of Francis Lovelace, 1668–1673* (Albany: State of New York, 1910), I, 250.

vanced by the governor for the creation of this commission was that there had been "complaints of irregular proceedings in the court." He wanted these examined "by some persons of integrity and experience."[101]

The first meeting of the commissioners was held on September 16 at Esopus. The report of the commissioners, issued two weeks later, indicates that William had been acting as custodian of public funds, had received taxes and fines, held bonds posted in judicial processes, rendered financial accounts to the governor, and performed other functions of a similar nature.[102]

Early the next year the governor set up a similar commission under his brother to survey and lay out lots at Esopus. William was included, too, in this commission, but although large grants were made or confirmed for several people, notably Thomas Chambers, the first settler of the area, there is no record of any land title vested in William's name.[103] This is probably explained by his determination to return to New York and by his preoccupation with affairs in that city.

Throughout the period of his residence at Altena and at Esopus (1658 to 1671) William made occasional transactions in Manhattan real estate. Toward the end of the period these began to increase in number. In 1666 he sold some forty-six acres near what is now 34th Street to ex-governor Stuyvesant, helping to form what became known as Stuyvesant's bouwery number 2. Next year he sold to Domine Megapolenses the house at Chatham Square where he had once lived and in 1668 he disposed of the entire Corlaer plantation to Van Cortlandt and Steenwyck, two of the town's wealthiest citizens. With the proceeds of these sales he was able in 1670 to buy from the widow of Thomas Hall an extensive farm in the area of the present Beekman Street. It included a brew house, a mill, horse mill, and an orchard. To these he later added an adjoining piece of meadowland purchased at public auction.

[101] *Ibid.*, 262.
[102] *Ibid.*, 278.
[103] *Ibid.*, 283. See also Brodhead, II, 157.

At this farm he took up residence in the spring of 1671, when he was relieved of his duties as schout at Esopus.[104]

The first few years after William's return to Manhattan were dominated by military events. Within two weeks of his arrival he became a lieutenant of militia under Captain Creiger who had superseded him at Altena in 1659 and who had vanquished the Esopus Indians in 1663–64.[105] Next spring a practice mobilization of Captain Steenwyck's troops took place "on the hill beyond Mr. Beekman's . . . outside the city."[106] In the summer the authorities "solicited" contributions for the defense of Fort James (formerly Fort Amsterdam) and in so doing provided a convenient index of Beekman's wealth. Although the "donations" ranged downward from 800 florins, William's contribution of fifty florins, which he paid in beer, was surpassed by those of only thirteen of the town's thirty-five leading citizens.[107]

The occasion for the military preparations was the third Anglo-Dutch War which began in March of 1672. In this struggle Charles II, in conformity with the terms of the secret treaty of Dover which he had concluded with Louis XIV in 1670, undertook to assist the French in destroying the commercial dominance of the Dutch. In return the French were to support his secret designs to restore England to Catholicism. Widespread suspicion of the intentions of Charles II as well as hatred and fear of France made the war increasingly unpopular in England itself. At Manhattan, where the Dutch inhabitants at the time of the English conquest of 1664 had been granted a specific exemption from compulsory military service against their fatherland, the war could hardly have been popularly supported under any circumstances. Alarmed by reports of Catholic intrigue in England, the Dutch Calvinists of Manhattan could only have rejoiced when the arrival of a Dutch fleet in July of 1673 forced the English to surrender.

Soon after the surrender the Dutch Council of War took

[104] Stokes, VI, 143, 110, 90, 78; NYHS, *Collections 1913*, 26–27.

[105] Paltsits, *op. cit.*, 90.

[106] *Ibid.*, 638.

[107] *Ibid.*, 704. "Florin" is used interchangeably with guilder for the standard gold coin of the Dutch. Others paid in sewant, wine, beaver skins, bread and other goods as well as beer.

action to restore civilian government according to the old traditions. Six elected representatives of the populace were urged by the conquerors to "convoke the Commonalty of this city, without delay, here in the City Hall, and to cause them to nominate six persons for Burgomasters and fifteen for Schepens, to wit: from the wealthiest inhabitants and those only who are of the Reformed Christian Religion; from whom said Commanders and Council of War will select some as Magistrates of this city." Passed over for Burgomaster, William was second of the fifteen nominees for Schepen. Of those actually named as Schepens he was listed first. By mid-August the governmental pattern of pre-English years was fully reëstablished.[108]

William now labored diligently to preserve Dutch control at Manhattan. Early in September he joined with other city officials in a plea, which was quickly granted, that two of the warships, which it had been announced would be sent home, be retained at New Orange, as the city was now called. In December William was the first of four lieutenants cited after the four captains of militia for having shown "great zeal" in fortifying the city. A petition for reinforcement of the city's defenses drew his signature in January. In March, before news of the conclusion of peace had reached Manhattan, he was a member of the commission which made an evaluation, presumably for defense-tax purposes, of the worth of "the most affluent and best citizens" of the city.

In this new listing of the fortunes of the elite William's ranked as usual at about the median. Thirty-three had larger valuations given their estates; twenty-seven smaller. William's modest estate of 3,000 florins compared quite unfavorably with that of Frederick Philipse (80,000), with that of his old political associate Van Cortlandt (45,000), or with those of his fellow commissioners Steenwyck (50,000) and Jacob Leisler (15,000), but it was adequate to maintain prestige.[109]

[108] Fernow, *op. cit.*, VI, 395–400.

[109] *Doc. Rel.*, II, 699–700; Edward T. Corwin (ed.), *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York* (7 vols.; Albany: University of the State of New York, 1901–16), II, 633 *ff*. This work is cited hereafter as *Ecc. Rec.*

In view of the prominence which the Dutch gave to wealth as a prerequisite for political office it is perhaps surprising that, despite his comparatively modest estate, William was one of the two nominees for Burgomaster in the summer of 1674. This contest in fact was a repetition of that which had taken place in 1658 between Van Cortlandt and Beekman for the same office. Then Stuyvesant had chosen Van Cortlandt and in so doing had made it necessary for William to accept the appointment at Altena. This time the appointment went to William, but its significance was soon dulled by the news that the States General had ordered the province restored to "his Majesty of Great Britain."[110]

Shortly after the announcement of the impending return of the province to the English, Governor Colve, thinking that it would be necessary for him to return to Holland before the English forces would arrive, asked the Burgomasters and Schepens and a few other officials to nominate ten persons from whom he would then select five "to possess and exercise executive authority" until the arrival of the English. With great care the nominating group ranked its ten nominees in apparent order of preference. Leading the list were two provincial officials, Steenwyck and Bayard. Next came the two Burgomasters, Van Brugh and William Beekman. Fifth was the veteran militia leader, Martin Creiger.[111] No election took place, however; the English arrived before the Governor departed.

When the British did arrive, the Burgomasters and Schepens and the Council of War with the approval of the Governor named Steenwyck, Van Brugh, and Beekman "to repair on board his Majesty's frigate now anchored under Staten Island and there to welcome Governor Major Andrews and . . . to request some privileges for the advantage of the commonalty."[112] At this conference Andros authorized the Dutch leaders to "assure the Inhabitants of the Dutch Nation that they should participate in the same privileges with those of the English

[110] Fernow, *op. cit.*, VI, 111–13, 168.
[111] Fernow, *op. cit.*, VII, 132–134.
[112] *Ibid.*, 138.

Nation, and that his Honor should promote their interest as much as possible."[113] On November 10 the British resumed control.

The change of administration took place without apparent incident until the following March. Then, when Andros ordered all citizens to take a blanket oath of fidelity and allegiance, eight of the most prominent Dutch leaders led by Steenwyck, Bayard, Van Brugh, and Beekman signed a petition, March 16, asking the same assurance which had been given in 1664 that the taking of the oath would not be interpreted to impair the freedom of religion or the exemption from compulsory military service against the Dutch which had been promised in the surrender terms. If this were not to be granted, the petitioners asked permission to sell their goods and move elsewhere.[114]

Two days later they were all in jail on the charge of disturbing the government.[115] They soon won release on bail and began to prepare for trial. One of the eight Dutch leaders took the oath; the charges against him were dropped. The seven hold-outs were tried and convicted of "refusing and opposing the taking of the oath of allegiance." Their sentence was the "forfeiture of their goods and chattels to his Majesty." On November 1, while Bayard alone was free on bail for the night, the others were "questioned as to their satisfaction with the late judgment."[116] Whatever the course of this session, all the defendants took the oath. There were no forfeitures of property.

Considering his quite evident preference for Dutch institutions and his attempted defiance of Andros on the matter of the oath, it is by no means surprising that William Beekman passed the first three years under the restored British rule without political appointment. During these years he appears in the records primarily as a payer of taxes. Late in 1676

[113] *Valentine Manual, 1853*, 498.

[114] *Doc. Rel.*, II, 741–743; *Ecc. Rec.*, I, 670, 677.

[115] New York State Library, *Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668–1783* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1902), 21. This work is cited hereafter as *Calendar of Council Minutes*. See also Martha Lamb, *History of the City of New York*, 21.

[116] *Cal. Hist. Mss., II*, 40–41.

he was assessed £1.14.6 on property valued at £300. These figures were approximately one-fortieth of the tax and the property evaluation of Frederick Philipse, one-tenth those of Leisler, and one-thirteenth those of Steenwyck. When a house tax was imposed the next year, it cost William 16/ for his house and brew house while some paid a tax of £1 on their houses only.[117] Obviously his fortune still loomed only modestly.

Before the end of 1678 William was back in office once more. Andros had by then reorganized the government of the City of New York under a Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and aldermen, all of whom he himself appointed. William became an alderman in 1678 and was reappointed in 1679 and in 1680. In the latter year he advanced to the head of the list of aldermen and to the title of Deputy Mayor.[118] The Mayor at that time was Captain William Dyer who was also Collector of Customs and a member of Andros' Council.

The authoritarian pattern of New York's municipal government had its parallel in that of the colony itself. Law-making was done principally by the proprietor, the Duke of York, who remained in England, or by his Governor and Council in the colony. Nominally some authority was vested in the Court of Assizes, the annual meeting of the Governor and Council with the justices of the peace and the Mayor and Aldermen of New York. Because all these officials were appointed by the Governor, the Court of Assizes in actuality could do little but "register the edicts" previously determined by the Governor. "It is not surprising," thought O'Callaghan, "that the people were dissatisfied and disappointed with such a system; or that, dissatisfied, they in time expressed their discontents."[119]

An opportunity for the full expression of this discontent began to materialize in October of 1680 with the arrival in New York of the London lawyer, John Lewin, special in-

[117] *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776* (8 vols.; New York: Dodd & Mead, 1905), I, 34, 50. This work is cited hereafter as *Minutes of the Common Council.*

[118] *Ibid.*, 69, 74, 87.

[119] Edmund B. O'Callaghan, *The Origin of Legislative Assemblies in the State of New York* (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1861), 9. This work is cited hereafter as O'Callaghan, *Origins.*

vestigator for the Duke of York. Lewin bore instructions to look into alleged irregularities in Andros' conduct of the government with particular reference to the revenue accounts. More important he bore orders recalling Andros to London to answer these and other charges, all of which were later found to be virtually groundless.

Hurried and preoccupied with other matters associated with his recall, the departing Governor neglected to make specific provision for the renewal of the expiring authority for the collection of customs duties. Actually the authority expired in November of 1680, but no attention was called to the matter for many months. Then in May of 1681 opportunity knocked. Andros had departed; the Lieutenant-Governor was temporarily absent from the province and Mayor Dyer, collector of customs, was laid low by illness.[120]

A ship came in from London on May 9. Its goods were unloaded and turned over to the consignees "without takeing any notice of the Custome house or officers, absolutely Refusing to pay any Customs." When Brockholls, the Lieutenant-Governor, returned he attempted to have the legislative oversight corrected, but the Council informed him that there was no authority to continue the expired taxes without express orders from the Duke. The unfortunate Collector, Mayor Dyer, was summoned before the very court of which he was normally the presiding officer, that of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of New York. With Deputy Mayor William Beekman presiding in his place, the court promptly ordered Dyer to surrender the goods which he had been holding for non-payment of customs.

Pressing toward the logical conclusion of their argument, the members of the Mayor's court then intimated to Brockholls and his Council that the Collector should be tried for usurping the power of government. With suspicious alacrity the Lieutenant Governor in Council committed Dyer to trial at the next regular session of the General Assizes. However, at Dyer's request a special session of the Court was called immediately; a grand jury was sworn and the Collector was formally indicted

[120] Brodhead, II, 343–345, 351–359.

for having "trayterously maliciously and advisedly used and exercised Regall power and authority over the Kings subjects." More specifically it was charged that he had "many times since the first of November last, establisht and imposed unlawfull customs and impositions on the goods and merchandize of his Majesties Liege People tradeing in this place, by force compelling them to pay the same and hath employed and made use of souldiers to maintaine and defend him in these his unjust and unlawful practices contrary to the great Charter of Libertyes (Magna Carta), contrary to the Peticon of Right, and contrary to other Statutes in these cases made and provided. . . ."[121] In July a petit jury was sworn and twenty witnesses had been heard for the prosecution before the defendant confounded his accusers by demanding to know the authority of the commission which was trying him. After consultations among themselves the self-righteous patriots decided to send the defendant to England "to be proceeded against as his Majesty and Council shall direct."[122]

Meanwhile, of course, New York enjoyed duty-free trade. The historian Brodhead took some pleasure in pointing out that an important motivation for the acts of the New Yorkers was the impairment of their trade resulting from the competition of the Jerseyites who apparently paid no duties at all. He also asserted that the merchants made no effort to pass along these windfall advantages to the consuming public; there were no price reductions.[123]

Important as were the economic motivations underlying the actions of William Beekman and his associates, political considerations were by no means absent. While the grand jury was preparing its indictment of Dyer, an agent from the new colony of Pennsylvania arrived upon the scene with stories of the legislative assembly which was to be inaugurated there. Influenced to some extent by this information, the grand jurors presented to the General Assizes a repetition of New York's old grievance that it possessed no popular assembly.[124]

[121] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 287–89, 318–321; NYHS, *Collections 1912*, 10–12.

[122] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 288.

[123] Brodhead, II, 351; Osgood, *17th Century*, II, 361.

[124] Brodhead, II, 353.

Taking up the cue the General Assizes prepared a powerful petition to the Duke of York setting forth the case for the establishment of a provincial assembly.

The identity of those who drafted this document is unknown. Long Island residents had long demanded a popular legislative assembly for the Province and it is quite probable that they continued at this time to exert a dominating influence. But William Beekman and other Dutch leaders had joined with them in 1653 in asserting that the consent of popular representatives was "necessarily required in the enactment of laws and orders" and in protesting that officers and magistrates were appointed "without the consent or nomination of (the) people." Now William Beekman as Deputy Mayor of New York was an *ex officio* member of the General Assizes which dispatched the following petition to the Duke of York:

> That we, your royal highness' most humble and obedient servants, assembled together by virtue of your royal highness' authority established in this colony, [had in open court presented to our consideration a request from the grand inquest] humbly craving the conjunction and assistance of this court to make a submissive address to your royal highness: therein representing the great pressure and lamentable condition of his majesty's subjects in this your royal highness' colony; and also presenting, for the only remedy and ease of those burdens, that an assembly of the people may be established by a free choice of the freeholders and inhabitants of this your royal highness' colony . . . we find ourselves encouraged and obliged to concur with the said grand inquest; and . . . represent the miserable and deplorable condition of the inhabitants of this . . . colony, who for many years past have groaned under inexpressible burdens by having an arbitrary and absolute power used and exercised over us, by which a yearly revenue is exacted from us against our wills, and trade grievously burdened with undue and unusual customs imposed on the merchandize without our consent—our liberty and freedom inthraled, and the inhabitants wholly shut out and deprived of any share, vote, or interest, in the government, to their great discouragement, and contrary to the laws, rights, liberties, and privileges of the subject; so that we are esteemed as nothing, and have become a reproach to the neighbours in other his majesty's colonies, who flourish under the fruition and protection of his majesty's unparalleled form and method of government in his realm of England, the undoubted birthright of his subjects. we . . . pray . . . that . . . the government of this your colony may, for the future, be settled and established, ruled and

governed, by a governor, council, and assembly; which assembly to be duly elected and chosen by the freeholders of this . . . colony, as is usual . . . with the realm of England, and other his majesty's plantations . . .[125]

Upon receipt of this petition accompanied by the captive Collector of Customs the Duke of York displayed great self-control and considerable wisdom. He wrote a mild letter to Brockholls on the 8th of August instructing him to "continue by some temporary order the same payments of Customes and other publique dutyes as have been lately established and collected." To sweeten this order the royal proprietor professed "at the present (to) have severall things in my thoughts which I hope may conduce much to the good and satisfaction of all the inhabitants and traders within that government." He had decided apparently to establish a popular assembly.[126] Dyer was actually held under bail in England for more than a year, but when it finally became clear to the authorities that no accuser would appear against him, he received another assignment.[127]

Meanwhile New York was taking other actions to express its discontent. Despite the fact that the Duke's investigating agent, John Lewin, had been expressly authorized "to tender an oath to any person or persons" whose testimony he required in pursuance of his investigations,[128] Deputy Mayor Beekman and the aldermen now saw fit to issue a declaration of protest at his doing so. They described Lewin's actions as

A greate Encroachment and contempt of his Majesties Authority Established here by his Royall Highness and Breach of the Privilidges and Libertyes thereof and Expresly Contrary to an order in Councell Dated the 9th of Aprill 1679 Wherein It is ordered that None But the Mayor Deputy Mayor or Eldest Aldermen Presideing in this Citty Doe Grant any Warrantts (157) Admitt any Private Heareings or takeing of oaths but

[125] *Ibid.*, 658. See also NYHS, *Collections 1912*, 15–57. The bracketed section was overlooked in the Brodhead transcription.

[126] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 296; see also Paul M. Hamlin and Charles E. Baker, *Supreme Court of Judicature of the Province of New York, 1691–1704*, I, (New York: New York Historical Society, 1952), 8, note 13. This work is cited hereafter as *Supreme Court*.

[127] *Ibid.*, 321. See also Brodhead, II, 357. Osgood, *17th Century*, II, 164, is inaccurate on this point.

[128] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 284.

to be only Done as formerly by the Mayor or Such presiding in his absence and noe oath to be taken But in Courts unlesse in or upon a Heareing for A Determinacon in Case of Necessity . . . And this Being a matter of Dangerous and Ill Consequence tending to the Scandall Blemish and Disparagement of Severall of his Majesties Subjects by Such Clandestine and private Oaths and Deposicons which the partyes Concerned Cann have noe Knowlidge off . . . Wee Doe Hereby Declare and Certifie that all Deposicons Soe taken by the said John Lewin . . . are Without our or any of our Knowledge Privity or Consent And therefore Undue Unpracticable extra judiciall and Illeagall and Contrary to the Knowne Law and Orders of the Government . . .[129]

Two days later (September 17, 1681) Brockholls wrote to Governor Andros that despite his having received a commission from the Duke as Receiver General of revenue "Nothing is paid in by any, and though . . . I have done what possible to gett the Excise kept up, my Endeavors therein have proved ineffectuall—the merchants takeing advantage of Courts who Being Scared Refuse to Justifie and maintaine my Orders."[130]

Soon Lewin returned to England, his depositions still intact, and New Yorkers settled down under the pliant Brockholls to reap the harvest of their ingenuity. William Beekman and his fellow aldermen continued to administer municipal matters and Brockholls discreetly reappointed all of them in 1681 and 1682 without attempting to name a successor to the unfortunate Mayor Dyer.[131]

Finally, at the end of August, 1683, the Duke's new Governor arrived. He was Colonel Thomas Dongan, an Irish Catholic gentleman of ability, integrity and charm. His instructions contained provision for the creation of an Assembly of eighteen members to be elected by the freeholders. The members were to be free to "consult and debate among themselves" on virtually anything and to pass laws subject to the absolute veto of the governor. If not vetoed, the acts of the Assembly were to be effective unless and until disallowed by the Duke himself.[132]

[129] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, 88–89.

[130] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 289.

[131] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, *passim*.

[132] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 331, 334; Brodhead, II, 370 *ff*.

The new governor arrived on Saturday. At ten o'clock the following Monday morning he met with the magistrates at City Hall where he read his commission and showed his instructions. In addition to the provision for an elected Assembly these included orders to "give and Confirme to this Citty all their Rights and priviledges and more if necessary." Pleased with the Governor and his instructions, the magistrates "Invited his Honour to dine with them att the Citty Hall the Next day and Severall of the old Magistrates and Ancient Inhabitants to accompany him Where his Honour Received a Large and Plentifull Intertainment and they had great satisfaction in his Honours Company."[133]

In this novel harmony of Governor and governed a flurry of activity commenced. In response to the request of the Deputy Mayor and aldermen the Governor issued a proclamation regulating the exchange value of certain foreign coins. In preparation for the election of an Assembly William Beekman and the aldermen ordered a census to be completed "with all possible speed" of "all the Freemen householders and Inmates and their male Children above the Age of 16 years." It was symbolic of the new cooperation that Beekman and several other local leaders were appointed to act with the Duke's new collector, Lucas Santen, in performing the functions of a court of admiralty and that Santen was in turn authorized by the City fathers to collect for the City the dock fees due from every ship which traded at New York.[134]

Then on October 17, 1683, there met the first representative legislature of the Province of New York. Its eighteen members are said to have been predominantly Dutch, but the loss of the Assembly's journals has made it impossible to identify more than a few of them. It is certainly possible, if not probable, that William Beekman was among New York's four representatives. As acting Mayor since the elimination of the unfortunate Dyer more than two years before, William occupied a post which gave him great prestige in the eyes of the inhabitants. Probably

[133] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, 96.

[134] *Ibid.*, 96–99; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, 153; NYHS, *Collections 1892*, 83–84.

only the two local men among the council members, Philipse and Van Cortlandt, enjoyed higher popular esteem. Clearly also William had played a leading role in the near-revolution which had been consummated before the granting of an Assembly. Furthermore, when a similar Assembly was constituted six years later under Leisler, the City's four representatives definitely included William Beekman.[135] William's frequent election to the post of alderman in ensuing years would also indicate that he was a perennial favorite of New York's voting public. But with or without William Beekman the Assembly proceeded to important work.

On October 26 the Assembly adopted its famous Charter of Liberties "for the better establishing the government of this Province of New Yorke, and that Justice and Right may bee equally done to all persons within the same." Its most startling feature was the statement that "Supreme Legislative authority, under . . . (the) Duke of Yorke, shall forever bee and reside in a Governour, Councell, and The People, mett in a Generall Assembly." It also provided that every freeholder should have a vote, that the Assembly should be convened at least once in every three years, that its members should have the privileges accorded members of Parliament, that there should be freedom of religion for those peaceable persons who "profess faith in God by Jesus Christ," and that there should be no tax without the consent of the "Governor, Council and representatives of the People, in General Assembly met and assembled." As a *quid pro quo* the Duke was granted in a "continued bill" the revenue from a number of import excises.[136]

Approved on October 30 by the Governor and Council, the Charter of Liberties was then proclaimed next day at City Hall "in the presence of his honour the Governor the Councill and representatives and deputy mayor and aldermen of this Citty the Inhabitants having notice by sound of Trumpet to heare the same."[137] Within a week additional proclamations were made at City Hall announcing among other laws those for the

[135] O'Callaghan, *Origins*, 35.
[136] Brodhead, II, 384–386, 659–661.
[137] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, 99.

administrative subdivision of the Province into twelve counties and for the naturalization of all Christian inhabitants, not bondsmen, who would take the oath of allegiance. The Assembly then adjourned until the following fall.[138]

Two days later (November 9) William Beekman, still Acting Mayor, presented to Governor Dongan the aldermen's petition for a city charter. Its first section merely identified the old rights which the City had traditionally enjoyed and prayed for their continuance. Among these there were no provisions for the election of any officials. The traditional guarantees, however, assured the maintenance of the City government as separate from that of the Province and made certain economic regulations. Among the latter were the requirement that all import and export trade of the colony break cargo at New York, that upriver trade by inhabitants of New York City be limited to freemen who had been residents of the City for at least three years, that only freemen could engage in retail trade or handicrafts, that the freedom of the City be granted only by magistrates, and finally that no flour be bolted (sifted) or packed for export in the Province save in New York City.

In addition to these old rights the City now asked for charter guarantees intended to establish a more democratic government. By the plan of the petitioners the City would be divided into six wards in each of which the freemen would elect annually an alderman, a common councilman, constable, overseer of the poor, scavengers and other officers "usefull and necessary." A Mayor was to be appointed annually by the Governor from among the six elected aldermen. Laws for the City were to be passed by the aldermen, councilmen, Mayor, and a recorder appointed by the Governor. Each year a sheriff was also to be appointed by the Governor, as were the town clerk and the coroner. The treasurer, however, was to be appointed by the City's legislative body. These things the petitioners requested in order to put them on a par with other municipal corporations within the realm of England.[139]

[138] Brodhead, II, 385–387.

[139] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, 102–105.

Minor objections raised by the Governor and Council had been answered by the magistrates when suddenly on November 24 there occurred a very quiet revolution. The old magistrates and a number of named individuals headed by Steenwyck and Bayard "being sent off for[,] all waited on the Governor att the forte . . . where the old magistrates were discharged and a Commission Given to Mr. Cornellius Steenwyck to be mayor and the other persons . . . to be Aldermen for the city of New yorke untill the usuall time of New elections being the 14th of October." Then the "old Magistrates Conducted the new ones to the Citty Hall where their Commission was read in the Court Chamber and they resigned to them the Bench who took their places as Nominated in the Commission."[140] As after the assembly of 1653, William had been purged.

Had Dongan expected his new appointees to be a less demanding group of magistrates he was quickly disappointed. Three days after their appointment they resubmitted the petition of their predecessors with only minor changes, one of which would have deprived the Governor of the right to name the town clerk. Although no official record of his having approved the previous petition is known, the Governor responded to the second request with a statement expressing surprise and wonder that "having lately granted almost every particular of a Large and considerable petition lately preffered by the preceeding Mayor and aldermen he should so suddenly Receive another petition from the present Magistrates to request either what was before granted or any thing Contrary to their former petition." However, he also indicated that he was "willing to oblige them as farr as can be Raisonably done."[141]

By December 10 the actual division of the City into wards had taken place according to the plan of the petition and the Governor had ordered that the "forme and Method prescribed in a petition presented by the former Mayor and aldermen . . . For the Weal and Government of the said Citty be put in practice untill such time as his Royall highness pleasure shall

[140] *Ibid.*, 106–107.
[141] *Ibid.*, 110–111.
[142] *Ibid.*, 112–113.

be further knowne."[142] For some years City government proceeded according to a rather loose interpretation of the petition, but in April 1686, the royal pleasure still unknown, Governor Dongan, encouraged by the promise of a £300 donation from the City, formally signed an official charter, since referred to by his name, which granted the essence of what was sought in the petition drawn up under Mayor William Beekman.[143]

Considering the abruptness of his dismissal by Governor Dongan, William's next appearance in public service seems somewhat surprising. An act of the Governor, Council and Assembly awarding a "free and voluntary present" to Dongan named William among four commissioners to arrange for assessments in New York County to raise the money. The commissioners on December 10 "required" the Mayor and Aldermen to call a meeting of the freeholders and freemen to name twelve assessors who were then to be instructed in their task by the commissioners.[144] Presumably the collections proceeded without incident.

The next October (1684) the Assembly met for its second session and New York City elected its first aldermen. William was not among the new aldermen, but he may well have been one of the Assemblymen elected in 1683 and, if so, would have continued to serve during the session of 1684 which passed laws in great number. By the fall of 1685 the Duke of York had succeeded to the throne as James II and because of that fact the New Yorkers were required to dissolve their first Assembly and elect a second. Whether or not William participated in this second legislature is also unclear, but in this year he was elected an alderman.

During the term which William now served as alderman, October 1685, to October 1686, the most important event was the issuance of the official municipal charter. The City fathers also made important regulations concerning the baking and sale of bread, the employment of Indian and Negro labor, collection of taxes, and the care of the poor.[145] These municipal

[143] *Ibid.*, 178, 290–305.

[144] *Ibid.*, 114.

events were overshadowed, however, by happenings at the Provincial level.

Soon after his accession James II and the Committee of Trade and Plantations met to consider New York's Charter of Liberties. Comparing it minutely with the governmental plans of other colonies they found it much too restrictive of the power of the crown and much too generous to "the People" and their elected representatives. It was not confirmed, but no orders to remold the Provincial government were issued for more than a year. Then in his instructions to Dongan James II ordered that the "Bill or Charter passed in the late Assembly of New York, containing several franchises, privileges and Immunitys mentioned to be granted to the Inhabitants of our said province . . . bee forthwith repealed and disallowed, as the same is hereby Repealed, determined and made void." For the future, laws were to be made by the Governor and Council. The Assembly was not specifically banned, but detailed provisions for the enactment of legislation made no mention of its existence.[146] Dongan formally dissolved it; the work of William and his associates was completely, but only temporarily, undone.[147]

After the expiration of his first term as an elected alderman William engaged in a variety of activities. At the end of 1687 the signature of Elder William Beekman was one of three which were affixed to a proclamation of the consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church asking that the special attention of the Deity be given to James II who impliedly had need of guidance. On the same day the consistory's call for contributions toward the building of a new church found William's signature next after that of the minister.[148] Then in 1688 as on several previous occasions, Beekman was named to a commission to make an inventory of the fort. As usual its condition was frightful. Its many deficiencies the commissioners described minutely in a long report which suggested numerous

[145] *Ibid.*, 155–179; O'Callaghan, *Origins*, 21–25.

[146] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 369–375.

[147] Brodhead, II, 458; O'Callaghan, *Origins*, 24.

[148] *Ecc. Rec.*, II, 950–951.

improvements. Members of the commission in addition to Beekman were Nicholson himself, Bayard, Van Cortlandt, Plowman, and Minvielle—all among the most respected men in the community.[149]

Despite his extensive political activity William did find time for business also in these years. His zeal in terminating the collection of customs in 1681 suggests that William had commercial interests, and in fact the records of a dispute between Governor Dongan and the Collector of Customs, Lucas Santen, indicate quite clearly that he did. In 1687 James II complained that the most notorious pirates when apprehended in New York were soon released because of deliberately inadequate prosecution or openly partial juries. Thus piracy continued to flourish to the "great detriment of Trade and (the) prejudice of our good brother the Catholick King (of France) and our other allies."[150] Dongan apparently shared in some degree the profits of these operations, for he was clearly less than ardent in his efforts to rectify the situation complained of by the King. His conduct brought forth a battery of charges from the more zealous, although not necessarily accurate, Collector of Customs. In Santen's accusations and Dongan's answers there is some indication of the commercial activities of William Beekman.

According to Santen, William Beekman attempted in 1687 to dispatch a vessel which he owned on a voyage to the West Indies either for the purpose of privateering, which in those days was frequently difficult to distinguish from piracy, or of salvaging a Spanish treasure ship which had gone down off the coast of Hispaniola. Dongan refused to grant clearance for the vessel, Santen charged, until he was given an interest in the voyage. Dongan insisted on the other hand that William's vessel was actually bound on a routine voyage and that the delay had been required in order to secure from William a bond to guarantee that the ship would not "make incursion upon the Spanish." Furthermore, Dongan stated, he was

[149] Brodhead, II, 521; Stokes, IV, 348.

[150] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 490. The Glorious Revolution was about to change the identity of England's allies and to involve her in the War of the League of Augsburg against France.

"sure Beakman never had a [privateer] vessel nor a share in a [privateer] vessel in his life."[151] In answering a second charge of Santen's, however, Dongan contradicted this statement.

Santen's second charge alleged that Dongan had improperly retained a share of the prize money which William had received for an ugly Dutch fishing vessel which his ship had captured while operating on a privateer commission issued at Nevis in the West Indies. Dongan's reply, supported by William Beekman's affidavit, denied that there was anything improper in his conduct in this instance.[152] In any case it seems clear that William Beekman owned at least one vessel at this time and that it engaged in privateering, if not in West Indian commerce.

By the time of the Glorious Revolution of 1689 Beekman had reached what might be considered retirement age. Despite his sixty-five years, however, William continued for some time to be active in politics, business, and ecclesiastical affairs. Elected to the Assembly called by Leisler, William apparently declined to serve because of "Old Age and other Bodyly Infirmytys."[153] However, he served repeatedly during the 1690's as an alderman in the New York City government.[154] As late as 1698 Governor Bellomont named him among those "qualified" for appointment to the Council.[155] The municipal records of these years are sprinkled, too, with evidence of William's continuing interest in New York City real estate[156] and in 1696 William was one of the Elders who sought and received an official charter from the royal authorities for the Reformed Dutch Church.[157] Until 1704 William continued to be embroiled in a dispute with the Common Council of the City over the title to certain waterfront properties upon which he had built wharves and made other improvements.[158] These

[151] *Ibid.*, 491, 493, 407.

[152] *Ibid.*, 408, 493.

[153] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 197; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 42, 159. The Leisler "Rebellion" is more fully discussed in Chapter IV.

[154] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, *passim*.

[155] John William Fortescue *et al.* (eds.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*, [*1661–1733*] 33 vols.; London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880–1939), Volume *1697–98*, 224. This work is cited hereafter as *Calendar of State Papers* plus volume dates.

[156] *Minutes of the Common Council*, I & II, *passim*.

[157] *Ecc. Rec.*, II, 1136–65.

[158] *Minutes of the Common Council*, II, 245, 248, 262, 264.

difficulties had apparently been settled satisfactorily, however, when William died in 1707 at the age of eighty-four.

William Beekman's life was not marked by momentous achievements which were his alone, but certainly he contributed significantly to the development of basic institutions in the Province of New York. He helped to establish a measure of self-government for the Dutch hamlet which was to become the world's greatest city. He was a perennial political leader under both English and Dutch rule and played an instrumental role in securing a municipal charter from the English authorities for New York City. Under the most trying circumstances he had conducted creditably the Dutch West India Company's affairs in its Delaware River Colony and he satisfactorily discharged similar responsibilities under both Dutch and English administrations at Esopus. He contributed lay leadership to the Dutch Reformed Church and in furtherance of his economic interests expanded the freight-handling facilities of the New York port to whose business he also added by commercial ventures of his own. His most important service to posterity, however, was to fight vigorously for more representative governmental institutions. It was not the least of his contributions that he left two sons, Henry and Gerardus Beekman, who were well qualified to carry on this work.

3

HENRY BEEKMAN I (1652-1716)

Landholder and Legislator from Ulster County

In 1652, when William Beekman yielded to the threats of the Indians by moving from his Harlem River farm to the comparative safety of Corlaer's Hook, an important consideration in making the decision was undoubtedly the safety of his family. His daughter was just two and his wife was already carrying their second child. Soon after the completion of the move their first son was born. In honor of his paternal grandfather the child was christened Henry.

When Henry was six the family, which had grown by almost annual increments, moved to the Delaware River site of William Beekman's new assignment. There on at least one occasion Henry turned to the Indians for playmates. After Henry returned home from the sand bank where he had been playing with some savage youths, his father was visited by a distraught group of Indian parents demanding to know what Henry had done to their children, none of whom had been seen since going off with him. Henry explained that he had left them playing on the sand bank, and a visit to the area disclosed a cave-in which had killed all of Henry's companions.[1]

While the family still resided on the Delaware, William twice petitioned Stuyvesant for a "cadetship" for his eldest son in order to help the family financially. Late in 1660 this petition

[1] Philip H. Smith, *General History of Duchess County* (Pawling: Philip H. Smith, 1877), 395.

was granted,[2] but exactly what that meant for eight-year-old Henry is not clear. It had no obvious relation to the school then functioning in New Amsterdam in which tuition payments were required if the stigma of charity was to be avoided.[3] It may well have been a sort of military apprenticeship, but in any case it apparently provided Henry an education not inferior to that of most of his upper-class contemporaries.

Henry may have remained in Manhattan enjoying his cadetship when the family moved to Esopus in 1664, but within a short time he came to Kingston, as the conquering English chose to call Esopus. He appears to have remained there as a young man of nineteen when the family returned to Manhattan in 1671.

For the next ten years there is virtually no trace of Henry except for the record of his purchase with Thomas Hendricks in December 1676 of an island in the Rondout River near Kingston.[4] But in 1681 Henry married Johanna Lopers, daughter of a Swedish sea captain,[5] and from then on his name is to be found with increasing frequency among the public records.

When Governor Dongan ordered the convening of an Assembly in 1683, Esopus was ordered to send two delegates. They were to be selected by an electoral body composed of four representatives from each town. First named of the Assembly delegates so chosen was Henry Beekman[6] who was then just thirty-one. What portion of the remarkable accomplishments of that gathering can be attributed to Henry Beekman it is impossible to say, but when county government was established for Ulster County pursuant to the general law passed by the

[2] *Doc. Rel.*, XII, 329.

[3] William Heard Kilpatrick, *Dutch Schools of New Netherland and Colonial New York* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), *passim*.

[4] Alphonso Clearwater, *The History of Ulster County, New York* (Kingston: W. J. VanDeusen, 1907), 51.

[5] William B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America Descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse Van Dyke* (New York: Knickerbocker, 1912), 7. This work is cited hereafter as Aitken.

[6] Nathaniel B. Sylvester, *History of Ulster County, New York* (Philadelphia, Everts & Peck, 1880), 68.

Assembly, Henry received one of the two appointments as justice of the peace.[7]

As justice, Henry, with his colleague Thomas Garton, was to have power, in sitting as the "court of sessions" for Ulster County, to name the magistrates for all the towns in the county. However, in some areas of the province it had already become customary for the town freemen to name their own magistrates and to this honor certain of the citizens of Ulster also aspired.

Meeting at the home of William DeMeyer under the leadership of Captain Thomas Chambers and Henry Pawling these citizens drew up a petition of protest to the Governor expressing their wish "that we may have liberty, by charter to this county, to choose our own officers to every town court by the Major[ity] voice of the Freeholders." They further urged, with respect to the monopoly of overseas trade enjoyed by New York City merchants, that "we may have liberty to transport all grain, flour, beef, pork, and all such produce . . . rendering and paying all such dues and customs as are required by the laws of the government." Every signer of the petition was at once arrested, probably at Henry's instigation, and indicted for riot. After having pleaded guilty of signing the petition the remonstrants were each fined and released on bail. At the September term of the court they were released from bail and their fines remitted upon their acknowledgement that they had been "ill-advised."[8] Henry, the popular representative, had become a judicial upholder of the prerogatives of Henry, the executive.

But if Henry had his troubles with the populace he also had difficulties with the Governor and Council. In 1685 he and Thomas Chambers, his opponent in the matter of the petition, received a summons to appear before the Governor and Council to explain why they had resisted John Ward, identified only as "bell ringer," in the execution of his duties. The culprits appear to have escaped serious punishment.[9]

[7] *Ibid.* See also Marius Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York, from its Early Settlement to the Year 1820* (New York: Burr, 1888), 75, 77.

[8] Schoonmaker, *op. cit.*, 77–79; Sylvester, *op. cit.*, 68–69; see also Osgood, *17th Century*, II, 281–83.

[9] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 138; see also *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 43.

The authorities seemingly bore no grudge against Henry for his interference with the bell ringer, for a few months later the offender received his commission as captain of a "troop of horse" in the Provincial milita under the command of his late cohort in wrong-doing, Major Thomas Chambers.[10]

Having become an Assemblyman, a justice of the peace, and a captain of militia within two years, it was perhaps to be expected that Henry should also have expanded his land holdings at the same time. The full extent of his properties in Ulster County remains a mystery, but in 1685 he did acquire 830 acres in an area known by the Indian name of Mogewarsinck and lying on both sides of Rondout Kill in Ulster County.[11]

With the Assembly fallen into disfavor and peace prevailing throughout the district, Henry was able to concentrate his energies for the next few years on being justice of the peace. In that capacity he encountered a variety of problems, but none more complex than the domestic-relations case of Hendrick Claes. Hendrick appeared before Henry to complain that his wife, Debora, "haith Declared that Shee is a whore." Debora, it appears, had been attracted to "Dirrick woodin-Legg" prior to her marriage to Henrick. She declared in fact "that Dirrick woodin Legg Is the father of hir Child and when She was with Child Dirrick wooden Legg was A gowing to bee married She went to him and said that as he had taken Awav hir Repatation hee shold give it hir Againe where uppon he gave hir badd words." Hendrick appeared willing to take her back again if she would promise to live with him "as an onest wooman shold Doe with hir husband," but the record of her reply states only that "Shee never did Love him and cannot love him and furder sayeth nott."[12] What poor Henry decided in the case was not recorded.

More typical of the cases which came before Henry was that

[10] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 139.

[11] Clearwater, *op. cit.*, 54.

[12] Louise Hasbrouck Zimm, *Earliest English Deeds of Ulster County, New York* (unpublished transcriptions condensed from Deed Books AA and BB in the County Clerk's Office, Kingston, 2 vols., 1937). Carbon copies of these two volumes are in The New-York Historical Society. They include many items other than deeds and cover the period from 1684 to 1710. The case of Hendrick Claes appears on page 24 of the volume marked "AA."

between John Ward and Henry Pawling. Ward had bought land from a third party who had made a highly qualified agreement with Pawling for the use of a path across Pawling's land. After having made the purchase Ward found that this agreement did not apply to him. He and Pawling could not agree on terms by which Ward could enjoy the same use of Pawling's land. Hence, there was recourse to the courts where Henry and his colleagues specified the terms of a new agreement.[13]

The quiet of this existence was shattered in 1689 by news of the Glorious Revolution and the consequent confusions in New York which culminated in the ascendance of Jacob Leisler. Kingston, like Albany, tried to remain aloof from the Leislerian movement and it succeeded fairly well. Yet it was true that most of the inhabitants, led by "Captain Hennery Beekman," on September 1, 1689, took the oath prescribed by the new "governor."[14] On the other hand, Ulster sent no delegates to the first session of Leisler's Assembly. When unidentified delegates were sent to the second Session in 1690 it was only after the Leislerian sheriff had postponed the election because he "feared a contest." The sheriff admitted to Leisler's assistant, Milborne, that "it ought to be a free election for all classes, but I would be loth to allow those to vote or to be voted for who have refused to this day to take their oath, lest so much leaven might again taint that which is sweet, or our head men [be defeated?], which probably might happen."[15]

Perhaps Henry Beekman, like so many others, did at first favor Leisler, but turned against him because of his excesses. At any rate when Leisler fell in 1691 and a new anti-Leislerian government was instituted, Henry represented Ulster in the new Assembly. There he was undoubtedly embarrassed by the problem of punishing the Leislerian leaders, for prominent

[13] *Ibid.*, AA, 27. Additional justices had been created since 1684.

[14] Sylvester, *op. cit.*, 69. The Leisler "Rebellion" is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

[15] Schoonmaker, *op. cit.*, 85–86. On the sessions of the Leisler Assembly, see Edmund B. O'Callaghan, *The Documentary History of the State of New York* (4 vols.; Albany: Weed, Parsons [3 vols.] 1850, and Charles Van Benthuysen [Vol. 4], 1851), II, 42, 158, 159, 163. This work is cited hereafter as *Doc. Hist.* There is an earlier edition which has different pagination.

among those sentenced by the new government to be hanged, beheaded, drawn and quartered was his younger brother.[16] The extrication of Gerardus Beekman from this plight, however, is a subject for another chapter.

The new Assembly had been summoned by Governor Sloughter on the day after Leisler's surrender and only two days after his own arrival in New York. As instructed, Sloughter ordered the freeholders of the various counties to elect delegates who were to convene eighteen days later, April 9, 1691, in New York City to assume a limited authority in the Provincial government.[17] The almost uninhabited Dutchess County was added to Ulster for purposes of representation in the Assembly and the freeholders of the combined counties duly elected Henry Beekman and Thomas Garton to be their delegates. Garton, however, declined to serve. Delayed apparently by uncertainties arising from this inconvenience Henry missed the formal opening ceremonies of April 9, but put in his appearance at 8 o'clock next morning to introduce the first item of business for the new Assembly in its first regular session.[18] Henry's concern was that provision be made

[16] Lawrence H. Leder (ed.), "Records of the Trials of Jacob Leisler and His Associates," *New York Historical Society Quarterly*, XXVI (October, 1952), 431–57.

[17] For Governor Sloughter's commission and instructions see *Doc. Rel.*, III, 623–29, 685–91. For the chronology, see Stokes, IV, 362 *ff*. The granting of a popular Assembly in New York and the story of its subsequent struggle against the governors is best understood if thought of in conjunction with contemporary governmental practices in England. In this connection it should be noted that in 1689 there had been passed: (1) the Bill of Rights, forbidding the king to suspend laws of his own volition, to levy taxes or maintain a standing army without consent of Parliament, to interfere with the right of petition, to limit freedom of speech in Parliament, to require excessive bail, or to impose cruel and unusual punishments; (2) the Toleration Act, exempting dissenting Protestants from the penal laws established in defense of Anglicanism; (3) the Mutiny Act, limiting to one year the king's authority to impose military discipline, thus insuring annual meetings of Parliament. While New Yorkers tried to imitate the mother country governmentally, it should also be borne in mind that they were also conscious of governmental practices in the neighboring colonies which had done better than New York in securing a measure of popular control.

[18] Schoonmaker, *op. cit.*, 90; also New York (Colony), *Journal of the Votes and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Colony of New York [1691–1765]*, (2 vols.; New York: Hugh Gaine, 1764–66), I, 2. This work is cited hereafter as *Assembly Journal*. The Assembly, of course, was none too representative by modern standards. Suffrage was limited to freeholders; voting was public and oral; non-voting was high even among the qualified; Long Island was badly

for an election in Ulster and Dutchess Counties to name another representative to serve with him. Disposing quickly of that item, the Assembly turned to the Governor's message which had been delivered the day before.

With admirable brevity the Governor's message directed the attention of the legislators to the principal problems of the Province. Chief among these were "The Support of the Garrison at Albany, etc.,"[19] the "Continuation of the Revenue,"[20] and "An Act, for quieting of the late [Leislerian] Troubles, and Assurance of the Peope in General [and the Leislerians in particular], from any Pursuit [or persecution], saving to every one [injured or suffering property damage during the controversy] his particular Action [to recover for such injury or damages]."[21]

The importance of the first of these questions was at once established by the arrival of Councilor William Nicolls. The Governor and Council had instructed Nicolls to inform the Assembly "that his Excellency was sending up . . . 60 Men to

under-represented in comparison with less populated Hudson River districts. See Herbert L. Osgood, *The American Colonies in the 18th Century* (4 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), I, 238 *ff*. This work is cited hereafter as Osgood, *18th Century*.

[19] The Glorious Revolution, it should be remembered, touched off the Franco-British contest which was to dominate world history for more than a century to come. Throughout his political career Henry Beekman was to be concerned primarily with problems arising from this contest, *i.e.*, with problems of defense and its finance. Because New York lay on the obvious invasion route from Canada its defense expenditures were necessarily high. Unfortunate as this was economically, it helped the Assembly greatly in its struggle with the Governor for power. See note 20.

[20] "Continuation of the Revenue" in the usage of that time meant that the Governor desired the Assembly to pass an act authorizing him to collect certain excise taxes and customs duties for a period of time. The length of the period was usually at issue. In England Parliament had granted to the King for life the income from certain excises. Customs revenue, however, had been granted for four years only. Income from these sources was to be employed for the normal activities of government. It was referred to as the "revenue." War finance and other special expenditures required special legislative action. Thus in emergencies the legislature could bargain effectively against the executive to win concessions of power, particularly in defining the purposes for which the special funds were to be expended. See Charles W. Spencer, "Colonial Wars and Constitutional Development in New York," *Addresses and Sermons Delivered before the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York and Year Book for 1914–1915*, ed. by Louis E. deForest (New York: Society of Colonial Wars, 1915), 52 *ff*.

[21] *Assembly Journal*, I, 3.

Albany; and desires the Assembly would take into Consideration, their Support, Maintenance, etc. there, and what Forces are requisite for the securing of that Post, and what Fund for the defraying of that Charge."[22]

Before attacking such a mundane question the Assembly preferred, however, to pass weighty resolutions. The members recorded their vigorous opposition to Leisler by approving unanimously a resolution which thanked the Governor "for taking such effectual and speedy Care for the suppressing the many Disorders and Disquiets that were in the Government, at his Arrival here."[23] A second resolution, also passed without objection, pledged the members to support with their lives and fortunes "their Majesties Government of this Province, and the Protestant Religion, against the French and all other of their Majesties Enemies."[24] Henry was a member of the committee which presented these resolutions to the Governor.

In the afternoon the Assembly came to grips with the defense problem. Henry and several others were appointed to a committee "to inspect the State and Condition of the Frontiers of this Province at Albany; and to consider what Quantity of Forces, may be needful for the Defence thereof."[25] Only after this did two members of the Council arrive to administer to Henry the oath of office which the others had sworn the day before.

With his appointment to the committee to inspect the Albany defenses Beekman was introduced to the twin legislative problems of defense and finance which were to follow him throughout his political career. Unfortunately there is seldom any way of ascertaining the degree of Beekman's influence in such committees. One can only attribute to him an indefinite measure of responsibility for the consequences of the committee recommendations.

The committee to inspect the defenses of Albany reported four days after its appointment. Its recommendation, as reflected in the Assembly's request to the Governor on the same

[22] *Idem.*
[23] *Idem.*
[24] *Idem.*
[25] *Idem.*

day, was that a company of 100 men be maintained at Albany for a year. The Governor was requested to provide a detailed estimate of the expenditure which would be required so that the Assembly could take action to raise the necessary funds.

The Governor estimated that £2,000 would be required. Accepting this estimate, the Assembly apportioned the sum to be collected among the counties and instructed each to make the required payment to the customs office. An important addition to the act provided that the funds raised were to be used "for the paying and defraying the Incidentall Charges of the said Company of fusileers and their officers for one whole yeare as aforesaid, and for noe other use Intent or purpose whatsoever."[26] The Assembly had already begun to imitate Parliament in controlling executive authority by means of the power to raise revenue and authorize its expenditure.

In addition to aiding in the preparation of the defense bill which challenged the right of the executive to expend funds without legislative restraint, Henry Beekman lent support to another piece of legislation which was of importance in the incipient contest between the Assembly and the Governor. Among the acts of the Assembly of 1683 had been one requiring that a number of excise taxes be paid to the royal authorities for an unspecified time. This constituted a virtual abdication of power by the Assembly and that fact was perhaps in the minds of the new legislators of 1691 when they unanimously resolved on April 24 that "all the Laws consented to by the General Assembly, under James, Duke of York, . . . not being observed, and not ratified and approved . . . are . . . void."[27]

In place of the perpetual grant of tax revenues made by the previous Assembly the more circumspect solons of 1691 fixed a definite time limit. Their bill for "the better Defraying of the publique and necessary Charges . . . of this Province" imposed a large number of taxes "PROVIDED allwayes that

[26] For the text of the law see New York (State), *The Colonial Laws of New York* (5 vols.; Albany: James B. Lyon, 1894–96), I, 240. This work is cited hereafter as *Colonial Laws*.

[27] *Assembly Journal*, I, 8.

this Act . . . shall only Continue . . . in force for . . . two Years . . . after the Publication thereof."[28]

In setting up the judiciary system Henry and his colleagues were equally farsighted. A committee which included Henry Beekman was named on April 15 to consider this question. Two days later the committee reported its bill. The details need not concern us except in two respects.

First is the blunt provision that the courts established thereby were to exist for two years only. Reference is also made to the sitting of "the next Assembly." Thus it was very clear that if there were no Assembly at the end of two years not only would there be no revenues for the maintenance of the government, but there would be no courts. Together the revenue and the judiciary measures made the summoning of another Assembly virtually mandatory. They guaranteed, too, that when called, the Assembly would possess important weapons to employ against the Governor.

Noteworthy also were the provisions of the judiciary act relating to the payment of the judges. The Assembly of 1683, of which Henry had also been a member, had ordered the counties to pay fixed sums to the treasurer of the City of New York. That officer was then to be responsible for the payment of the Provincial judges from these funds. However, the Assembly of 1691 seems not to have gone so far in attempting to exercise control, for the Governor and Council were informed on April 24 that the Assembly had decided to leave the appointment and commissioning of judges to the royal representative. A joint committee of the Assembly and the Council, under the chairmanship of Nicholas Bayard and including Henry Beekman, did retain the power to settle fees for all the offices of the Province. The references are vague and inconclusive but they seem to indicate that a compromise was reached on the manner in which the judges were to be paid. They were in short dependent upon both the Assembly and the Governor in Council.[29]

[28] *Colonial Laws*, I, 248–253.

[29] *Assembly Journal*, I, 4 *ff*. See also New York (State), *Journal of the Legislative Council of the Colony of New*

Before the adjournment of its first session the Assembly also gave consideration to the recommendation of the Governor that it take action to "quiet the late [Leislerian] Troubles." Here Henry appears to have played a very minor role, partly no doubt because of the involvement of his brother, but also perhaps because he was less vindictive toward Leislerians in general than were many of his colleagues. It is possible of course that his own initial cooperation with the Leislerians may have left Henry tainted in some measure. Whatever the causes, there is no indication that Henry participated in drawing up the anti-Leislerian legislation. On May 15, 1691, when Leisler and Milborne were executed it was with the consent and approval of the majority of the Assembly, but it was an Assembly which had voted in the absence of Henry Beekman. On April 28 Henry had asked for and received the permission of the house to return home because his wife was ill "and some other urgent occasions."[30] He seems to have remained at home for the remainder of the session. This suggests that Henry had deliberately absented himself in order to avoid involvement in the executions. In any case it is clear that he was not a leader of the vindictives in the Assembly.

During the fall of 1691, as King William's War continued the Assembly concerned itself with the prospect of French invasion. Deeming it imperative that they reinforce the garrison at Albany, the members referred the matter to a committee which as usual included Major Beekman. The committee recommendations as reflected in the final act were much like those of the previous defense act. One hundred and fifty men were to be maintained at Albany for six months. They were to be paid by levies handled as before and with the same restriction on the Governor's expenditure of the funds raised. The chief difference from the previous act was that this one authorized more sanctions to insure the full and speedy collection of the levies.[31]

York [1691–1775], (2 vols.; Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1861), I, 4. This work is cited hereafter as *Council Journal*. The text of the acts may be found in *Colonial Laws*, I, 167–68, 226–231.

[30] *Assembly Journal*, I, 9.

[31] *Colonial Laws*, I, 258–62.

Before this measure passed the Assembly, Acting-Governor Ingoldsby created a sensation by stating that he would sign no other bills until this "money" bill was passed. However, the Assembly would not be bullied. It asserted in a resolution that it was "the Privilege of this House, to send up their Bills when they please; and always the Custom, that what Bills are sent up for the Governor and Councils Assent, to be returned unto them, under the Governor's Hand assented unto." The Assembly passed four acts in that session. Two, at least, were signed before the "money" act.[32]

Frequently in this session Henry was among the delegates who acted jointly as spokesmen for the Assembly in presenting to the Governor and Council measures which the legislative body had approved. One of the more remarkable measures so presented was an "address" of September 26. It asked the Governor to name one day each month as a day of fast and humiliation because "the manifold Sins and Transgressions of the Inhabitants within this Province, have justly provoked the Almighty God, and are the chief and only Cause of his Displeasure, and of the sore and grievous Afflictions that this Province doth now and hath for several Years last past laboured under; and being now visited with the great Calamities of a burthensome War, and a Blast upon the Corn."[33]

In the spring of 1692 the struggle between the royal authorities and the Assembly involved Henry in a more nearly individual capacity. Customarily the royal authorities did not account to the Assembly for the expenditure of funds. Thus it was by no means a perfunctory request when on April 21 "Mr. Robinson and Major Beekman from the Representatives did attend [the Commander-in-Chief and Council] . . . to desire a list of the forces that have been employed for the securing of the frontiers at Albany and an Account of the Incidentall Charges."[34] The representatives wished to be assured that there were at Albany as many soldiers as they had provided money for. Some suspected that their hard-raised funds were being

[32] *Assembly Journal*, I, 17.
[33] *Ibid.*, 18, 19.
[34] *Council Journal*, I, 14.

put to other than bona fide military uses. Surprisingly Ingoldsby granted the request. The commissary was in town, the delegates were told, and "the list of the forces and Account of the incidental Charges should be forthwith prepared for their perusall."[35]

After studying the accounts for several days, the Assembly sent back two representatives to inform the Commander-in-Chief and Council that "they disallow of Sundry Charges which were approved off by the Council." A committee of the Council was appointed "to Confer with the Committee of the house of Representatives Upon the Charges Controverted."[36] The Assembly adjourned, however, before the joint committee could report. The Council committee formally requested authorization from the Council to delay its report until the next session,[37] but the records of that next session reveal no mention of the problem at all. The imperious Governor Fletcher had arrived meanwhile to fill the place which Ingoldsby had occupied. Fletcher's power may well have been the reason that the issue dropped from sight.

Elections for the second Assembly came soon after the dissolution of the first, but Henry was not returned for Ulster and Dutchess Counties. In New York City the Leislerians had defeated some of the first Assembly's members who were candidates for reëlection, but Henry's Ulster successors were as anti-Leislerian as he. Governor Fletcher intervened to influence some elections, but his later relations with Henry would make it seem unlikely that, despite Henry's aggressive record in the Assembly, there was ever any serious breach between them. Probably the reasons for Henry's retirement were voluntary. One suspects he did not choose to run.

Until his election to the fifth Assembly in 1695 Henry was again primarily a local leader. He was justice of the peace as

[35] *Ibid.* Channing [Edward A. Channing, *A History of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), II, 301] in discussing the suspicions of the legislators on this subject indicates that they were directed at Fletcher. However, at this time Fletcher had not yet arrived in New York. He arrived August 30, 1692, whereas this inspection of the accounts took place on April 21, 1692. See Stokes, IV, *passim.*

[36] *Ibid.*, 15.

[37] *Ibid.*, 17.

well as lieutenant colonel in command of the militia forces of Ulster and Dutchess Counties. His militia command comprised "four Companys of Foot and one Troop of Horse now made Dragoons, consisting of 277 men," or about one tenth of the total Provincial militia.[38] Messages from Major Schuyler at Albany where French attack was anticipated every day kept Henry in a state of almost constant military alert. His men would be needed desperately if Albany were attacked in force and a large attack on Kingston was by no means impossible, or so its inhabitants felt.

For two years Henry suffered the strains of anticipating French attack. The first real threat came in the fall of 1693 when two of the soldiers at Albany were carried off by a raiding party while Major Schuyler sat listening to reports by two Indian women of other raids throughout the area. The Major's dispatch to Fletcher reported that "the express that carrys this to Sopuz [Kingston] commands all the Farmers to come in [to the area of the fort] and desired that Colonel Beekman would send a 100 men not knoweing but that there may be a considerable force."[39]

No crisis materialized, but two months later Major Ingoldsby, still in command of the royal forces, indicated to the Governor that he had ordered Colonel Beekman to send to Albany "what forces he can gett ready in Ulster County." He intended to send for all the farmers soon.[40]

On January 17, 1694, just five days after the date of Ingoldsby's letter, the Council in New York considered a letter from Henry "complaining of the backwardness of the militia to repair to Albany, having no pay and being apprehensive as to their families during their absence." He was instructed to "expedite such militia as he can collect to Albany."[41]

Preyed upon by rumors, Henry reported scarcely two weeks later "a design of the French to attack Kingston and march thence against Albany." He had stopped the fifty men who were

[38] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 27, 29.
[39] *Ibid.*, 64.
[40] *Ibid.*, 81.
[41] *Calendar of State Papers, 1693–96*, 232.

en route to Albany. The Council thought such an attack was most unlikely, but nevertheless urged that "detachments of the militia should be kept in readiness."[42]

Three days later Henry reported "people were flying into Kingston from all parts." The Council "still disbelieved the probability of danger there," but the Governor thought it would be wise to have 500 men ready to march at short notice. He also expressed "his sense of the hardships of marching men away from their families on every uncertain report." More troops of horse were summoned.[43]

The anxiety finally passed without further incident involving Henry and there is no record of the Ulster militia and their commander until the following winter. Then on New Year's Eve (1694) the Council entertained Henry's complaint of insubordination. "Captain Garton and Captain Hasbrooke," he reported, "refuse to fortify their part of the town of Kingston, as directed by the Governor." The Council advised him to keep the companies of those men on constant duty in those parts of the town where the defenses were weak from long neglect.[44] There was one more alarm in 1696, but there is no indication that it concerned Henry. The war ended in 1697.

The period of Henry's absence from the Assembly saw him become involved also in the perpetual controversy over sectional economic privileges. One of the reasons for the movement to obtain a municipal charter for New York City had been the desire of the inhabitants to perpetuate the ancient economic privileges enjoyed by residents of that metropolis. Among these privileges was the requirement that all imports and exports break cargo at New York and that all flour for export from the colony be bolted (sifted) at New York. Confirmed in the charter, these rights of the Manhattan dwellers had long irritated the up-river population. They had been listed among the grievances of the "rioters" whom Justice Henry Beekman had jailed in 1684.

In 1691 Jacob Rutsen, another Ulster County leader, had

[42] *Ibid.*, 244.
[43] *Ibid.*, 247.
[44] *Ibid.*, 421.

brought suit through the attorney, William Nicolls, for the termination of the monopoly. The suit had been defeated eventually, but in 1694 Nicolls succeeded by diligent lobbying in securing legislation rescinding the privilege. Testimony as to what actually happened in relation to the passage of the Bolting Act, as the measure was called, is contradictory, but certain conclusions as to Henry's role emerge. He and Rutsen, and perhaps some other local leaders, with varying degrees of complicity had arranged to raise for "lobbying" purposes the sum of £400. Some of this came from their own contributions and those of other local residents. Some of it reportedly came from locally collected tax funds. Apparently none of this money was required to secure the approval of the Assembly for up-river people were well represented in that body. Up-river delegates simply refused to pass needed legislation on other matters until their log was rolled. The Council, more committed to New York City interests, was somehow brought to approve the measure by a vote of 7 to 3, and the Governor signed, it was reported, for the immediate consideration of £100 and the promise of more. How much more the Governor was to receive is not clear. Nicolls and perhaps some members of the Council may have received portions of the remainder of the sum which Henry and his friends had raised.[45]

Meanwhile the independent spirit of this Leislerian-dominated Assembly of 1694 had aroused the ire of the domineering and irascible Governor Fletcher. After dissolving the Assembly he reportedly employed extreme coercion against the Leislerian candidates and voters, especially those of New York City, in the new election of 1695. Whether or not this same condition prevailed in Ulster and Dutchess Counties is not clear, but it is evident that the Leislerian Rutsen was not returned to the Assembly. The Ulster and Dutchess delegates were both anti-Leislerians, Henry Beekman and William Demiere.[46]

Henry was ten days late for the beginning of the session,

[45] *Calendar of State Papers, 1698*, 285, 291; Osgood, *18th Century*, I, 263. An account somewhat different from Osgood's and probably more accurate appears in *Supreme Court*, II, 264–68.

[46] Also spelled "DeMeyer."

but on July 2, the day after his arrival, he was named chairman of a committee to present to the Governor and Council a bill making a present of £1,000 to Fletcher and to the regular army soldiers. Fletcher graciously declined the offer as it applied to him, but he learned to think favorably of Henry Beekman. Next day Henry and some others waited on the Governor and Council to find out how they felt about the Assembly's proposal to grant the new government printer, William Bradford, £20 salary annually from its revenues in addition to the amount provided by the Governor.[47] Presumably the Governor saw little reason to allow this important functionary to become even partially dependent upon the Assembly. The proposal got no further; the printer remained in the Governor's control.

In later sessions of the Assembly in 1695 Henry interested himself again in the problems of defense and finance. After serving on the committee which joined with the Governor and Council to work out military plans, Henry followed through with the "Ways and Means" Committee which was to recommend to the house measures for raising the revenue which the military plans required.[48]

The report of the Ways and Means Committee apportioned among the counties each of three separate appropriations. This was done probably in order that the county taxpayers might see clearly just how much each of the three undertakings was costing them. One of the three sums (£864) was for Major Schuyler's Company. Another (£1000) was to finance the mission of the Assembly's agent, William Nicolls, to London. The third (£500) was for "the Companies appointed by His Majesty."[49] When the Governor found this last sum inadequate, Henry and some other Assembly delegates, after conferring with the Governor, agreed that the amount should be increased from £500 to £700. After the Assembly had approved the increase, Henry and three colleagues presented the amended measure to the Governor.[50]

[47] *Council Journal*, I, 79; *Assembly Journal*, I, 54–55.

[48] *Assembly Journal*, I, 60.

[49] *Ibid.*, 60–61.

[50] *Ibid.*, 64.

In that same session of the Assembly Henry attempted to push through a resolution providing that the people of Ulster County who had been mobilized as a consequence of the various "Alarms" of French invasion should be included among the recipients of any forthcoming compensation to individuals for such service. This resolution was not acted on in the fall session of 1695, but in the spring of 1696 it passed.[51] However, no funds had been appropriated for such compensation when the Assembly session terminated.

In this spring session of 1696 Henry again served on the principal committee concerned with defense and with the raising of funds to pay for defense measures. In response to the Governor's request the committee brought forth a bill to provide £2593 to raise a force of 120 men to protect Albany for another year. The committee draft of this bill included a passage which provided that the inhabitants, as a consequence of this measure, were to be freed from "Detachments," meaning apparently conscription, "except in case of Invasion or Rebellion, for the Space and during the Term of one whole Year." At the Governor's insistence Henry and his colleagues changed this provision by adding "Except in Case of Inevitable Necessity."[52]

The Governor also requested that a committee of the Assembly examine the "Accounts of the Revenue and Taxes, and the Debts of the Government." His reason for desiring such an examination was to make it clear to the members of the house that the fiscal needs of the government required an extension of a recently expired authorization to collect a specified "additional rate" on the importation of certain commodities. The Governor's case was a good one and the authorization he sought was contained in a bill passed by the Assembly and presented to him by the two delegates from Ulster County. It extended the term of the additional duties for another eighteen months, but made very rigid provisions as to which government debts the funds should be used to pay and in what

[51] *Ibid.*, 60–67.

[52] *Ibid.*, 67.

manner they should be accounted for by the Collector of the Customs.[53]

The fifth Assembly might have gone on indefinitely had Governor Fletcher continued to have his way. There was no doubt that Governor and legislature got on well together. However, London heard more and more reports of official connivance in the violation of commercial regulations, of the condoning of piracy, and of coercion practiced against the Leislerians in the elections of 1695. In view of these reports the Earl of Bellomont was at length commissioned to replace Fletcher and upon his arrival, April 2, 1698, the Assembly was at once dissolved.

As their choice for representatives to the new Assembly which was soon ordered Henry's old constituents now named the Leislerian Hasbrouck and the anti-Leislerian Garton. Hasbrouck arrived in New York several days in advance of Garton and participated in efforts designed apparently to organize the closely divided assembly on a compromise basis. After the arrival of Garton, however, the anti-Leisler forces, perhaps because of his vote, were able to take control of the house and to expel a number of the Leislerians.[54]

Meanwhile Governor Bellomont, conspired against at every turn by anti-Leislerian Council members, had ousted a number of them from the Council and replaced them with leaders of the opposition party. The anti-Leislerian Assembly he soon dissolved and in the elections of March, 1699, he succeeded in getting a strongly Leislerian house.[55]

This time the district of Ulster and Dutchess Counties with great political discernment sent two Leislerians. Henry Beekman and his friends were out of power. Until the death of Bellomont and the return to power of the anti-Leislerians three years later, they were to suffer much embarrassment from investigations of the old regime.

The principal purpose of the investigations conducted by Bellomont was to discredit further his predecessor. One way

[53] *Colonial Laws*, I, 331–32, 367–69; *Assembly Journal*, I, 69–70.

[54] *Assembly Journal*, I, 85–91.

[55] Osgood, *18th Century*, I, 279.

in which he chose to do this was through the exposure of the irregularities in the passage of the Bolting Act of 1694. Here Henry was forced by the Governor and Council to testify under oath as to the part he played in arranging for the passage of the act.

It is significant that the Leislerian, Rutsen, who was the real prime-mover of the bi-partisan enterprise, testified fully without apparent coercion, whereas Beekman's identification with the other faction made him a most reluctant witness. He may well have feared not only the discredit of his faction, but also discriminatory penal action against himself.[56]

Another area in which Fletcher's record was open to attack was in the granting of land patents. Here in the eyes of Bellomont there was not only past scandal but continuing injustice which would impede Provincial growth. Barely three months after his arrival in New York Bellomont wrote home asking for "power to vacate all Fletcher's grants, which are so extravagant, that the province can never be peopled, there are half a dozen of his grants that come not much short of Yorkshire, for extent of land, and the persons have no merit. One Henry Beckman a Lieut. Col. in the Militia has a vast tract of land as large as a midling county of England, for which he gave Fletcher a hundred dollars, about 25 English [pounds], and I am told he values his purchase at £5000."[57]

Writing later in the year to the Board of Trade on the same subject, Bellomont corrected the information he had given previously about Henry Beekman. Henry had not one grant, but two. The first Bellomont described as "a tract of land in Dutchess County, containing about sixteen miles square." The second [also in Dutchess County] was a tract "upon Hudson's River about 8 miles in breadth and 20 miles in length." Bellomont had discovered meanwhile that Fletcher had made other grants of even greater size.[58]

The smaller of Henry's two grants was an area in Dutchess County just across the Hudson from Kingston. It embraced

[56] *Calendar of State Papers, 1698*, 285–291.

[57] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 327.

[58] *Calendar of State Papers, 1698*, 306.

most if not all of what is now the town of Rhinebeck, an area of 21,766 acres or about 34 square miles. There had been other grants in that region and there was much dispute over boundaries and occasional repatenting so that it is nearly impossible to determine the exact area of the grant. However, the basic patent from which Henry was at length able to consolidate ownership of virtually the entire area included in the present town of Rhinebeck was that which had been granted by Governor Fletcher in 1697.

The larger of Henry's grants was an area in the southeast corner of Dutchess County. Referred to as the Beekman Patent, it included all of the present towns of Unionvale and Beekman and parts of Lagrange, Pawling, and Dover. The total area was about 84,000 acres or 130 square miles. It appears that the two patents were issued originally at the same time, although both were later "amended" in important ways.[59]

Governor Bellomont had exaggerated considerably the size of Henry's grants, but their actual extent was still impressive. Furthermore the land was good and the quit-rent a moderate 40 shillings annually for each patent.[60]

With some backing from the authorities in England Bellomont continued to fight for the revocation of such excessive land grants. Nearly a year after he first took notice of the grants to Henry Beekman, Bellomont wrote the Board of Trade indicating that he had some hope of getting bills passed to vacate the grants to Delius, Bayard, Evans, and Heathcote. Against these men he was in fact successful. However, as he pointed out in his letter there still remained "the following Extravagant Grants, vizt. Colonel Smith's . . . Phillip's . . . Beckman's . . . Schuyler's . . . Livingston's . . . Ranslaer's" and also VanCortlandt's.[61]

All these grants, wrote Bellomont, "comprize I verily believe

[59] Frank Hasbrouck (ed.), *The History of Dutchess County, New York* (Poughkeepsie: S. A. Matthieu, 1909), *passim*; P. Smith, *passim; Calendar of Council Minutes*, 114, 118, 120; *Calendar of New York Colonial Manuscripts indorsed Land Papers in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643–1803* (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1864), 47.

[60] Hasbrouck, *op. cit.*, 40.

[61] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 514.

full three fourths parts of this Province, and are one with another . . . 20 miles square by the nearest computation I can make . . . Neither do I find there is £5 per annum Quit Rent reserved to the Crown upon all these vast grants, put together, which is an insufferable fraud in Col. Fletcher. . . ." These last-mentioned grants, said the Governor, "I have neither time nor strength to breake at this time; but if your Lordships will send over a good Judge or two and a smart active Atturny Generall, I will God Willing, . . . breake all these Extravagant Grants."[62]

As the controversy dragged on into 1701 it was argued in behalf of the grantees that to vacate the grants would deprive them unjustly of the sums they had expended in improving their lands. To this Bellomont replied that "I do not hear that Frederick Phillips's son, Colonel Schuyler, Collonel Beekman or Collonel Smith, have any tenants on their grants." He complained too that the few poor tenants who lived on the grants of Livingston and Van Cortlandt did so in virtual vassalage.[63]

Beekman and his fellow-grantees were fortunate, however, in that grants similar to those in New York had recently been made to important Englishmen in Ireland. The abandonment of Bellomont by the Board of Trade may well have been influenced by the realization on the part of the Board's members that to vacate New York grants would strengthen the case against those in Ireland. In any case the remaining grantees succeeded in blocking further action until the death of Bellomont opened the way for a more tractable successor to terminate the issue.

Despite the efforts of Governor Bellomont to void his land grants, Henry Beekman may well have regretted that gentleman's demise, which occurred on March 5, 1701, for without the restraining influence of the Governor the Leislerians began to take revenge on their opponents for the harsh tactics which had been employed in the aftermath of the Leisler affair. Although Henry had not been among the vindictives, there had never been much doubt as to where he stood. In fact, just

[62] *Ibid.*, 514.

[63] *Ibid.*, 822–23.

three days after Bellomont's death the leader of the vindictives, Nicholas Bayard, had listed Henry among those whom he recommended to the Board of Trade as qualified for appointment to the Council of the next Governor.[64] Consequently Henry undoubtedly felt some personal apprehension when Bayard was arrested, indicted for high treason, convicted, sentenced to die. Bayard's property was also confiscated and his execution momentarily anticipated. Bayard was spared, however, pending consultation with the authorities in England, and Henry seems to have suffered no greater inconvenience than being kept out of political offices to which he may have felt himself entitled. By December 1701 he was sufficiently bold to head the Ulster County signatories on a strongly worded petition to the King expressing the shock of the anti-Leislerians at having been "turned out of places in the Government" so that these might be "filled with persons least qualified for their posts" who desired through their "private corrupt designs . . . to enrich themselves by the spoils of their Neighbours."[65]

At last in the spring of 1702 Lord Cornbury, the new Governor, arrived. With him came an entourage which could have brought only joy to anti-Leislerian hearts. Its most familiar figure to the New Yorkers was Daniel Honan, former private Secretary to Governor Fletcher and an accomplished spoilsman thoroughly sympathetic to the Bayard point of view. There were no representatives of the Bellomont administration.

The new Governor, a close relative of the Queen's, had been a military officer, a supporter of William and Mary against James II, and a member of Parliament. It seems clear, however, that he sought the New York appointment principally because of the extra-legal money-making opportunities afforded in that Province. An ardent Anglican, he was also fully determined to repress dissenting Protestants. If these aspects of his character were not sufficient of themselves to repel most

[64] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 849.

[65] *Ibid.*, IV; 933, 938, 941. See also *Colonial Laws*, I, 488–89, for the text of an act of the Leislerian Assembly of 1702 intended to guarantee Leislerian control in Ulster County.

New Yorkers, they certainly were when combined with the "eccentricity" which later led him to appear publicly in feminine attire.[66]

Cornbury's political orientation, foreshadowed by the identity of his associates, came clearly to light soon after his arrival. The Leislerians were driven from the Council, and from other posts of importance in the Provincial government. In Ulster County Henry Beekman quickly became Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in place of the Leislerian leader Jacob Rutsen. The offices of sheriff and county clerk underwent similarly motivated shifts which restored the county as completely as the Province to anti-Leislerian dominance.[67]

That fall the populace of Ulster chose Henry and another anti-Leislerian, Thomas Garton, to replace its Leislerian representatives in the Assembly and Henry was among the Assemblymen who signed a declaration of loyalty to Governor Cornbury. Henry's constituents issued at the same time a similar declaration which added, however, an expression of regret that it was not "in the name of the whole [population of the county] for these wedges that have been formerly forged, these last four years have been tempered to that extream hardness that have split the County, almost into two halves, Yet we thank God, can say we are the Cheifest and Greatest Part."[68]

Despite the agreement so evident between Cornbury and the new Assemblymen on the subject of Leislerism, important differences soon developed to make the relationship of executive and legislature anything but harmonious. Cornbury was interested primarily in making money and secondarily in defending the royal prerogative and the powers which it gave him. The Assemblymen were eager to keep down expenditures and to increase their own power. Thus conflict between execu-

[66] Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 61–62; Charles W. Spencer, "The Cornbury Legend," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, XIII (1914), 309; *DAB* ("Cornbury").

[67] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 171; Edmund B. O'Callaghan, *Calendar of New York Colonial Commissions, 1680–1770* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1929), 8, 9. Rutsen and other Leislerians were harrassed for some time over the accounting of taxes and quitrents collected by them. See *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 306, 309; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 184, 191, 193.

[68] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 1005–06, 1009.

tive and legislature was inevitable despite the initial harmony and the common enemy in the Leislerians.

In the new Assembly, which met at Jamaica because of the yellow fever epidemic at New York,[69] Henry Beekman held positions of leadership and trust quite frequently on less-highly controversial questions. When a showdown with the Governor impended, however, Henry seems always to have given way to other leaders. At the first meeting of the new Assembly Henry and another member were assigned to inform the Governor and Council that the Assembly had appointed a committee to meet with a committee of the Council for the purpose of drafting a congratulatory message to Queen Anne on her accession. When, at the Governor's suggestion, the Assembly took up the question of improving the Province's desperately inadequate defensive installations it did so in committee-of-the-whole with Henry presiding. Later he of course reported to the House the decisions of the committee-of-the-whole. On the important committee for grievances, which was to take a most vigorous role in asserting the powers of the Assembly, Henry was the first named, but his colleague Thomas Garton acted usually as spokesman.[70]

Henry was also a member of the committee which framed legislation to void all the acts of the Leislerian Assembly under Nanfan and some of the later acts of Bellomont's administration. Prominent among those so voided was "an Act for Vacating, Breaking and Annulling several extravagant Grants made by Col. Fletcher." Although Henry's own grants from Fletcher were not among those "vacated" by this Leislerian measure, he undoubtedly disliked the precedent and its implied threat to his own grants. The Queen later disallowed the act voiding the "vacating" statute[71] but no action was taken against Henry's grants.

Another committee on which Henry served in this session of

[69] Stokes, IV, 433–36. The Assembly returned to New York November 14, 1702, to meet at Michael Hawdon's tavern. See *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 177, 186.

[70] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 177; *Assembly Journal*, I, 146–48.

[71] *Assembly Journal*, I, 154; *Colonial Laws*, I, 523–25.

the Assembly considered the "Regulateing of Slaves." The measure which this committee wrote into law authorized masters to "punish their slaves for their Crimes and offences att Discretion, not extending to life or Member." It also banned the meeting together of more than three slaves save by consent of their masters, and authorized towns to employ a "Common Whipper" who was to be paid on a fee basis.[72]

In the next session (1703), Henry concerned himself with a variety of subjects. He helped to revise the regulations concerning administration of local government finance and he participated in drawing up plans to deal with those militiamen who failed to respond when the militia was ordered out for frontier defense.[73] Henry also worked on the legislation concerning the erection of fortifications at the "Narrows." This measure was most remarkable for its provision that the undertaking be financed by direct personal taxation of a progressive nature. Members of the Council were to pay 40/; Assemblymen 20/; practicing lawyers 20/; wearers of "Peruwigs" 5/6; bachelor freemen over twenty-five years of age 3/; all freemen over sixteen years were to pay 9d whether or not they had paid any of the above surtaxes. Furthermore slaveowners were to be assessed one shilling for each slave between the ages of sixteen and sixty.[74]

Henry undoubtedly supported and may have contributed to the drafting of two other measures of this session of the Assembly. One provided for the inspection of the revenue accounts of the colony by agents who would be accountable not to the Governor, but to the Assembly.[75] This was to give rise to bitter conflict in the future. The other measure was a petition to the Queen which sought financial assistance for the preparation of necessary defensive installations. Henry and one other Assemblyman presented this document to the Governor and Council as the session closed.[76]

After a brief and harmonious fall session which dealt with

[72] *Assembly Journal*, I, 155; *Colonial Laws*, I, 519–21.
[73] *Assembly Journal*, I, 161.
[74] *Colonial Laws*, I, 550–54.
[75] *Ibid.*, 548–49.
[76] *Assembly Journal*, I, 172.

routine defense problems,[77] a real conflict developed between the Assembly and the Governor in the spring of 1704. Henry Beekman appears to have remained in the background of the controversy at first, but later he was to take a more active part. The difficulty started when Cornbury opened the session with a request for an increase in the revenue. This provided the House with an excuse for examining in detail the accounts of the "revenue" which it customarily granted to the executive for a period of years in order to enable him to conduct the normal functions of the government. In the manner of many subsequent "fishing expeditions" the legislators checked into the handling of special appropriations as well as the regular revenue and found evidence of "irregularities" both in the collection and expenditure of funds. In attempting to force the Governor to make good the sums misspent the House reduced its new defense appropriation by a comparable amount. The Council attempted to modify the bill passed by the House only to encounter the charge that it had no right to amend a money bill.[78]

The question now became a "constitutional" issue involving the definition of "General Assembly," of the phrase, "advice and consent," and the right of the Council to amend money bills. Briefly these issues were as follows: The House claimed that it was the General Assembly referred to in the Governor's instructions from the British government; the Governor and Council insisted successfully at this time that "General Assembly" included the Governor and Council as well as the Assembly. The House also objected to the statement in the enacting phrase of a bill that the decision therein stated had been taken with the "advice and consent" of the Assembly. The House members agreed that they had consented, but they insisted that they had not given or been asked for advice. The

[77] Henry helped in this session with the preparation of a defense bill to raise £1300 to pay 100 men for the defense of Albany during the winter. This time the sum was apportioned among the counties in the traditional fashion rather than levied directly on individuals in the manner of the measure for fortifying the narrows. *Assembly Journal*, I, 174; *Colonial Laws*, I, 562–64.

[78] *Assembly Journal*, I, 175 *ff.*; *Council Journal*, I, 215 *ff.*

Assemblymen lost on this score, too. "Advice" remained. However, on the matter of amendments by the Governor and Council to money bills, the House held firm. The Governor not only failed to get the addition he desired to the regular revenue, he also failed to get the usual funds for the employment of frontier troops. When the fall session of the Assembly held firm on the same principle, Cornbury dissolved the group and ordered new elections.[79]

Meanwhile another battle between the executive and the legislature involved Henry more clearly. This was the struggle over a bill for the "better and more effectual Discovery and Payment of Quit Rents. . . ." This bill had originated in the Council[80] and Henry had been named to head the Assembly committee to which the bill had been referred for recommendation by the House.[81] The Assembly accepted the amendments Henry's committee had urged and the bill moved on to the conference stage. There an impasse developed. Although the text of the bill is not available, it is clear that it was designed to augment the revenue at the disposal of the Governor by providing legal means for "better and more effectual Discovery and Payment of Quit Rents." The Assembly amendments were as surely designed to frustrate that purpose and to protect patent-holders who paid little or nothing in quitrents as well as to protect the "honest" patent-holders from the designs of a none-too-scrupulous Governor. One of the provisions stated that if a land-holder had taken several different patents on the same land, as had Henry Beekman, he was to be charged the quitrent stated in the last patent of confirmation only.[82]

There were several conferences on the bill, and although it was Henry who had signed the committee report recommending the amendments which the House accepted, the conference committee was built up by the addition of two Assembly "strong men," Garton and Delancey. From then on it was Garton who acted as chairman for the group. Under his leader-

[79] *Assembly Journal*, I, 187–89; Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 70 *ff*.

[80] *Council Journal*, I, 212.

[81] *Assembly Journal*, I, 189.

[82] *Ibid.*, 189–91.

ship the Assembly conferees successfully resisted the pressure of the Governor and Council.[83] The quitrent bill did not become a law.

A less controversial act during this session made it possible for the Assembly at last to abandon Hawdon's tavern for a more dignified meeting place in the New York City Hall. Henry Beekman served on the committee which approved the expenditure necessary to complete the Assembly chamber. This time there was no difficulty with the Governor who found it "a scandalous thing" that until this time "the Assembly has always sat in a Tavern." The dignity of the Assemblymen during the next four years was somewhat impaired, however, by the location of the Provincial prison in the chamber immediately above that of the Assembly. But in 1708 dignity triumphed once more when the Assembly, apparently without the leadership of Henry Beekman, voted funds "for Removing the Prison from over the Chamber where The Generall Assembly . . . now Sitteth to some other place."[84]

The new elections which Cornbury ordered in consequence of the impasse of 1704 altered the old Assembly but slightly. For Ulster there was no change at all. Its two representatives continued to be Henry Beekman and Thomas Garton.[85]

Early in its first session Henry and his colleagues resolved unanimously to appoint a Provincial Treasurer to receive and disburse all monies raised by the Assembly. This provision the members made applicable to the bill desired by the Governor to raise money for the defense of the frontier, but the Council returned the measure with amendments which presumably eliminated that provision. Garton had just returned home for three weeks when this occurred and in his absence it was Henry Beekman who, along with Mr. Van Brunt, executed the Assembly's instructions to "return the Bill . . . to the Council, and acquaint them, with the resolve of this House, That it is

[83] *Ibid.*, 189–94.

[84] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 1114–15; *Assembly Journal*, I, 177, 180–81; *Colonial Laws*, I, 569–71, 625–27.

[85] *Assembly Journal*, I, 144, 195.

inconvenient for this House, to admit of any Amendment, made by the Council, to a Money Bill."[86]

Five days later, July 19, the House also refused to accept amendments made by the Council to a bill amending a previous act, which Henry had helped to prepare, for "settling a Ministry." It now appeared that little of a constructive nature would be accomplished at that session. Perhaps for this reason Henry and two others won permission this same day to absent themselves from the House for three weeks "upon extraordinary Occasions." Ten days later the Governor delivered an important message to the House with "near one Half of the Members being absent."[87]

Although the Council had meanwhile backed down in the contest over the bill on "settling a Ministry," the Governor informed the Assembly that the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations could "conceive no Reason, why the Council should not have a right to amend all Bills sent up by the Assembly, even those relating to Money."[88] Nevertheless, the House remained obdurate. The bill for the defense of the frontier remained unpassed when, in early August, the House adjourned until late September.

The Governor's message to the returning Assemblymen in September spoke of the "absolute Necessity" of providing for the defense of the frontier. He thought 100 fusileers and 50 "Out-scouts" would be required and expressed his hope that the House would prepare a bill "for the raising a Sum sufficient to answer that Charge."[89]

Such a bill soon came before the House which then resolved itself into committee-of-the-whole to discuss the measure. After one day of discussion in committee-of-the-whole Henry Beekman reported that "they had made some Progress in the Matter . . . and had directed him to move, they may have Leave to sit again." Next day Henry was able to report the amendments suggested by the committee-of-the-whole which the house then adopted.[90]

[86] *Ibid.*, 201. See also, Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 72.

[87] *Assembly Journal*, I, 201–03.

[88] *Ibid.*, 203.

[89] *Ibid.*, 204.

[90] *Ibid.*, 204.

The Council again sought to amend the bill to eliminate the provisions requiring the funds to be collected and paid out by a treasurer responsible to the Assembly. Leadership in the struggle now passed to others, but Henry joined with all the other members of the House on October 12 in approving a strongly worded reaffirmation of the House position in answer to the Council's amendment message. Next day Cornbury prorogued the Assembly until the following spring.[91]

When the Assembly met again in May one of the problems presented to it by the Governor was that of preparing defenses against possible naval attack upon New York City by the French. As its first step the House named Henry Beekman and two others to "confer with the Managers, for the Fortifications of the City of New York, concerning the Estimate of the Charge for the same." On June 1 Henry reported that the managers estimated that £4,000 would be the minimum cost for the necessary fortifications. Apparently at Henry's suggestion, the House reduced this minimum to £3,000. Details of the bill were later worked out in committee-of-the-whole for which Henry reported to the House. On June 12 he presented the committee's recommendations and the next day the bill passed and was transmitted to the Council.[92]

The Assembly had not retreated. Its bill made provision for the collection and disbursement of £3,000 by a treasurer responsible to the Assembly, rather than to the Governor alone. Cornbury, who was not yet ready to accept this on his own initiative, adjourned the Assembly until September by which time he hoped to have heard from England on the subject.

On September 27 Cornbury was able to announce to the reconvened Assembly the ruling of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. He had been commanded, he stated, "to permit the General Assembly of this Province *to name their own Treasurer*, when they raise extraordinary Supplies for particular Uses, and which are no Part of her Majesty's standing and constant Revenue." Rendering the victory less sweet

[91] *Ibid.*, 207.

[92] *Ibid.*, 209, 211.

were certain minor qualifications to this permission and a strong assertion of the Council's right to alter or amend the money bills of the Assembly. Nevertheless the House accepted this compromise solution and revised its bills accordingly. With the ready assent of the Governor and Council the measure become law on October 21, 1706[93]—the last day of the session and, as it proved, of this Assembly, for Cornbury dissolved it the following spring.

Meanwhile Henry, with the major bill in other hands, had turned to newer problems. He took a principal role in the committee which drafted legislation making minor adjustments in the local government of Rensselaerswyck and of Albany; he performed a similar function with respect to the measure to furnish the town guards of Schenectady with firewood and to repair the guardhouse and the town gates. More important, Henry appears to have been the principal architect of a bill which purported "to encourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves." This act aimed to achieve its high-sounding purpose by guaranteeing that the baptism of such individuals would not be construed as an act of emancipation. A preamble ridiculed the contrary belief which, because of a tendency to refer to slave people as non-Christian, had gained some acceptance in the community. The act further provided that the status of the children should follow that of the mother in all cases and that no slave could testify for or against a freeman in any court case whatsoever.[94]

The duties of Assemblyman, of course, consumed only a portion of Henry Beekman's time. Ulster County affairs, Provincial matters of an administrative nature, private business, and church affairs also occupied him to some extent. Henry was among the several trustees named by the Provincial government to establish the new towns of Mumbackus (later called Rochester) and Marbletown in Ulster County. With other trustees he was responsible for allocating lands to the

[93] *Ibid.*, 213–16; *Colonial Laws*, I, 593–97. See *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 1152–55; *Supreme Court*. I, 388, note 204, has a forceful statement of Cornbury's view.

[94] *Assembly Journal*, I, 215–16; *Colonial Laws*, I, 597–98.

settlers and fixing the quitrents which were to be paid to the town.[95]

As commanding officer of the Ulster County militia Henry, of necessity, had important responsibilities in the county. In 1705 he received orders to be prepared to march to Albany with 100 men to defend the frontier,[96] but the crisis passed without more activity than was required by this alert.

Land speculation continued to interest Henry although he found Cornbury distinctly less amenable than Fletcher had been. In 1703 Henry secured a confirmatory patent defining more exactly the borders of his Dutchess County grants, but it apparently made little change in their extent. In collaboration with his brother, Gerardus, and the unscrupulous Daniel Honan, Henry also received a sizeable tract of land near Kingston at this time, but there were no more such grants as those in Dutchess County.[97]

As always Henry continued to be a leader of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at Kingston. His is the first signature on the appeal of the Kingston congregation to the Classis of Amsterdam, June 26, 1704, asking that a new minister be sent to replace the old domine who had been called to London to the Queen's chapel. Beyond specifying that they wished an erudite and pious man the Kingstonians left the qualifications of the new minister to the discretion of the Classis. Fearing to send cash lest it be lost to French men-of-war or privateers the appellants asked that the man selected pay his own expenses initially, subject, of course, to repayment when he reached New York. The minister was promised a salary of £112 per year from the moment he boarded ship and would receive additionally "a proper dwelling house," a large garden, and his fire wood.[98]

[95] Clearwater, *op. cit.*, 275–77, 343–44; Zimm, *op. cit.*, *BB*, 74; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 66.

[96] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 340. In 1708 Garton introduced a bill in the Assembly to pay £189 to the militiamen dispatched to Albany by Colonel Beekman, but it is not clear whether his motion applied to this expedition or another one. The bill failed to pass (*Assembly Journal*, I, 223, 235).

[97] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 174 and *passim*; *Calendar of Land Papers*, 68, 89–90, 93; *Calendar of State Papers*, *1702*, 124.

[98] *Ecc. Rec.*, III, 1615–19.

On New Year's Day, 1706, young Domine Beys arrived in New York in answer to this appeal. That same day he had a chilly audience with Cornbury and received a disdainful permission to proceed to Kingston. However, the river was still frozen below Kingston so it was decided that the Domine should remain in New York until the river opened up. Then a delegation would come down to escort him to his new home.

Heading the committee of three which arrived on February 23 was Henry Beekman. When all the preparations for their departure for Kingston had been completed, a misguided adviser prevailed upon the Domine once more to pay his respects to the Governor. It fell to Henry to accompany and to interpret for the Domine who spoke no English.

Although Henry humbly extended to His Excellency the offer of their services in whatever he might command, the Governor flatly forbade them to leave until the Domine had obtained license to preach. Henry attempted to remind the Governor of contrary assurances he had previously given and of the traditional rights of the Dutch Church, but he was ordered to keep silent and then subjected to a ferocious tongue-lashing to which many of the Council members were witnesses. To have accepted the license would have made the minister very much subject to the control of the Governor and would have jeopardized the independent status which the Dutch Church had traditionally enjoyed. Neither the Domine, nor Henry Beekman, nor the other leaders of the Dutch Church in New York were prepared to accept these implications of the licensing requirement.

After some days the Dutch leaders induced Peter Fauconier, one of the spoilsmen who had accompanied Cornbury from England, to present their case again. At first this tactic seemed to promise results, but in a second interview with Cornbury poor Fauconier fared worse than had Henry and Domine Beys. Feeling that there was nothing more to be gained by talking to the Governor, Henry and the Domine quietly set sail for Kingston at dusk on March 5.

Soon after his arrival in Kingston the Domine violated

promises which he had made in New York by performing baptismal ceremonies for some forty children. This could not have escaped the notice of the licensed Anglican minister who resided at Kingston, but that individual, interested chiefly it would seem in the salary demanded in his behalf by the Governor, made no trouble. Determined that their minister should not come under the Governor's control as had their schoolmaster who had recently been forced to accept a license from the Governor, several local leaders urged the Domine to challenge the Governor openly by beginning to preach without a license. Others advised him to continue to keep silent. One suspects that the more radical counselors included Henry Beekman, but it was the latter counsel which prevailed.

Soon, however, the Domine decided to return to New York to present his case once more to the Governor. This time he was presented by two Dutch members of the Council who discovered that a principal reason underlying the Governor's intractability was what Domine Beys referred to as his "special complaints against Col. H. Beekman, my elder, because of the severe language and his style of speaking, which he had several times publicly used, and which had been maliciously reported to his Excellency, and had given great offence to him." His Excellency had also heard reports of unflattering opinions expressed by Domine Beys, but in this case he was convinced that the reports were not based on fact and eventually, June 7, 1706, he granted full permission to the Domine to perform all his ministerial duties without special license.[99]

The new Assembly convened in August 1708, nearly two years after the previous Assembly had last sat, but the election had changed the membership only slightly. Beekman and Garton continued as usual to represent Ulster and Dutchess.[100]

The chief excitement in the new Assembly grew out of the attempt of the House, due to well-founded suspicions of Cornbury's extravagance, to get a clear accounting from Thomas Byerley, Collector and Receiver General of the Province, for

[99] *Ibid.*, 1615–19, 1663–68. For a characterization of Fauconier, see Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 62, 80.

[100] *Assembly Journal*, I, 218.

the funds which he had collected and disbursed since 1706. Cornbury himself was eager to be rid of Byerley who cooperated insufficiently in rigging expenditures. Therefore, when the legislators eventually confessed their inability to find Byerley "guilty of any Thing amounting to a Crime," the Governor was somewhat discomfitted.[101]

Many problems came to light in the course of this investigation but among these Henry Beekman concerned himself principally with the question of the "currency of Coin in this Colony." On September 17 he reported to the House detailed suggestions on exchange values which had been worked out by a joint committee of the Assembly and the Council. The measure attempted to freeze the inflated valuation given foreign coins in New York in contravention of an Act of Parliament which provided that foreign coins should be valued at the same rate in all British colonies. New Yorkers felt that the British legislation, if enforced, would make it impossible to carry on the government in New York, for New York's economy depended upon the overvaluation of foreign coins to attract the necessary circulating media of payments. Compulsory devaluation would reduce the extent of all accumulations of capital in the colony and thus render more difficult the collection of revenue sufficient to make required defense expenditures. The arguments of Henry and his fellow New Yorkers availed little, however, with the authorities in Britain. They preferred to have the colony send its foreign coins to England for British goods; they had no wish to stimulate industry and diversify business activity in New York by permitting the colony to accumulate specie. The New York law was disallowed.[102]

Henry met frustration, too, in the other measures with which he concerned himself in this session of the Assembly. He reported for a committee which had made several amendments to a controversial bill "for the better enforcing certain Cove-

[101] *Ibid.*, I, 218 *ff.*; Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 80–84.

[102] *Assembly Journal*, I, 225–26, 234–35; *Colonial Laws*, I, 620. For a thorough discussion of this problem, see Curtis P. Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies Before 1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1934), *passim*.

nants, relating to the Ferry to New York," but the bill was tabled until the "Petitioners against the said Bill be heard by their Council." The measure apparently was favorable to the petition of Cornelius Sebring who asked to be authorized to start a second New York-Long Island ferry to compete with the one leased to private operators by the City of New York. The measure died when New York City objected because the opening of a second ferry would diminish the revenues it received under its monopoly.[103]

In 1709 the arrival of Lord Lovelace who replaced Cornbury as Governor necessitated new elections for the Assembly, but Ulster saw no reason to change its delegates.[104]

During the short interval between his arrival and his death Lovelace devoted his energies chiefly, as did his temporary successor, Lieutenant-Governor Ingoldesby, to plans for the conquest of Canada. Prejudiced by the avaricious nature of Cornbury's administration the Assembly was little disposed, however, to grant great discretion to the Governor in financing military expeditions. Henry and his fellow delegates in fact narrowly restricted the purposes for which the sums they appropriated could be expended. Following the lead of a committee which included Henry, the Assembly succeeded also in putting into law a detailed itemization of the fees which various officers and courts throughout the Province were authorized to collect. The extortion which Cornbury and his followers had frequently practiced in the collection of fees was no longer to be tolerated.[105] Henry also took a leading part in the discussions of the committee-of-the-whole on ways and means of raising the vast sums to be expended. The committee which devised and secured the passage of an act to collect an excise on retail liquor sales in the province also included Henry as did the committee which framed legislation "for detaching 487 Men . . . out of this Colony" for military service on the expedition against Canada. Henry reported this bill and saw

[103] *Assembly Journal*, I, 224, 227; Stiles, *Brooklyn*, I, 427–28.

[104] *Assembly Journal*, I, 239.

[105] *Ibid.*, 242; *Colonial Laws*, I, 638–53.

it passed after the defeat of a motion to recommit it for further study. He continued in fact to serve on committees concerned with problems arising from the Canadian expedition, including the committee which dealt with the problem of issuing bills of credit to help finance the expedition, until at last the military forces were recalled in an unhappy admission of failure.[106]

Before the Assembly could meet again after the adjournment of November 1709, Robert Hunter, the new governor, arrived. Known as a friend of Swift and Addison and as a military hero under Marlborough, Hunter was a cultured, personable, honest and able man. He was firmly determined, however, to govern according to the royal prerogatives set forth in his instructions rather than to consent to the usurpation of those powers by the ever-encroaching Assembly.[107]

This determination became evident first in the matter of the fees which Henry Beekman and other Assemblymen had fixed by law the previous year. Traditionally the Governor in Council had been authorized to determine the amount and number of these fees and Hunter's instructions authorized him to follow that pattern. Upon the advice of the Council, after making public the disallowance of the previous act, Hunter set forth executive decrees establishing fees despite the long-standing claim of the Assembly which had been observed to some extent in the past, to a voice in the decision.[108]

As the contest between the Assembly and the Governor sharpened, Henry's leadership became less evident. However, Henry probably supported the majority position in the Assembly's contest with the Governor over the amount of that official's salary. Hunter's instructions authorized him to take £1,200 annually from the royal revenue of the Province, but the Assembly in providing for the "Support of the Government" voted on November 8 to pay the Governor a sum which Hunter referred to as about half that amount. Lewis Morris, formerly an opponent of Cornbury's regime in New Jersey, but

[106] *Assembly Journal*, I, 246, 247, 250–51, 261–66; *Colonial Laws*, I, 659–662.

[107] *DAB;* Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 97–98.

[108] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 132, also 94–95; *Assembly Journal*, I, 274, 279, 283; *Supreme Court*, I, 265–76.

now a member of the New York Assembly from Westchester, spoke vigorously against this move. In so doing he impugned the good faith of the majority in attempting to reduce the Governor's salary while taking no action to reduce their own allowances which Morris considered exorbitant.[109] Next day, after ordering Morris to withdraw, Henry and the other delegates voted unanimously to condemn his speech of the day before as having "falsely and scandalously vilified the Integrity of this House." It was then voted, not unanimously, that he should be expelled from the house.[110] One suspects that the moderate Henry Beekman was not among those who supported this drastic move, for later, when Hunter and Morris collaborated to produce a three-act farce based in part upon this episode, the identifiable targets of their burlesque did not include Henry Beekman. The Hunter-Morris version of the incident, however, saw the Assembly expel its one rational member for daring to oppose a resolution asserting that the Assembly was not to be "bound by any Laws, Rules or Customs, any Law, Rule or Custom to the Contrary Notwithstanding."[111]

As relations between the two branches of government continued to deteriorate, Henry apparently remained in the background, although the records are by no means clear in indicating who the Assembly leaders were. Hunter continued to attempt to carry out his instructions insofar as they called for the collection and expenditure of funds by appointees of the Crown rather than by those of the Assembly. The representatives themselves pointedly insisted, with reference to Cornbury rather than Hunter, that "The Misapplication of the publick Money's of this Colony, have been to apparent to avoid the Notice of the Assembly." Hence the members were prepared to insist that their own treasurer should hold and pay out all funds raised by acts of the Assembly for the support of the government.[112] At length, finding "many of your

[109] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 177; *Assembly Journal*, I, 283; Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 100.

[110] *Assembly Journal*, I, 283.

[111] *Androborus* (photostatic copy, NYHS).

[112] *Assembly Journal*, I, 287.

Members gone home," Hunter prorogued the Assembly until March when he hoped "second Thoughts and better Acquaintance, may perhaps create a better Disposition." However, when the delegates reconvened in April, twelve of seventeen voting members indicated that they thought the Assembly had no right to sit because the summons to meet had been issued from New Jersey, rather than from New York. Hunter promptly dissolved the Assembly and ordered new elections.[113]

Whatever role Henry had taken in the action which caused the Governor to dissolve the Assembly, he appeared once more as spokesman for the House after the elections. Henry and his colleagues in fact cooperated fully with the executive in preparing a new expedition against Canada. Henry served on the committee to congratulate the British commander, General Nicholson, on his arrival at New York, July 3, 1711, and to thank him "for his signal Services to her Majesty's Colonies, and sedulous application to her Majesty for reducing Canada." Next day Henry and one other Assemblyman, as delegates of the House, asked the Governor to proclaim a resolution of the Assembly designed to encourage the enlistment of volunteers for the Canadian expedition.[114]

That fall, however, the Governor brought up financial problems again. He asked for legislation for the "support" of the government, for the payment of the large accumulation of Provincial debts, and for the repair of military installations. Two such money bills passed the House, but when the Council attempted to amend them, the old struggle was on once more. Again Henry Beekman's name began to appear less frequently in the *Assembly Journal* and those of more radical leaders were inscribed more frequently.[115]

When the Assembly rejected the Council's amendments, the latter body frankly reminded the more presumptuous representatives that both bodies existed merely by the "Grace of

[113] *Ibid.*, 288.

[114] *Ibid.*, 290. Nicholson was something of a "favorite son" for those (especially York City merchants, Long Islanders, and Anglican clergymen) who wished to be rid of Governor Hunter (Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 114–118). However, there is no evidence to link Henry Beekman with this movement.

[115] *Ibid.*, 298 *ff*.

the Crown, signified in the Governor's Commission," and that the Crown had given the Assembly no more power in legislation than was vested also in the Council. To this obvious line of attack the Assemblymen replied by asserting "the inherent Right the Assembly have to dispose of the Money, of the Freemen of this Colony." This right they saw as based upon "the free Choice and Election of the People; who ought not to be divested of their Property (nor justly can) without their Consent." To the Council's assertion that the Lords of Trade "did conceive no Reason, why the Council should not have Right to amend Money Bills," the Assembly responded that such an opinion was "far from concluding there are none." It added further that "the Assembly understand them very well, and are sufficiently convinced . . . not to admit of any Incroachment so much to their Prejudice."[116]

Reconciliation made little progress as the session continued. There was still no provision for the revenue of the government when the Assembly session ended December 10, 1712. Furthermore, resolutions passed by the Assembly had condemned the Governor's unilateral determination of the various fees and his establishment of a court of chancery, although both of these acts were clearly within the powers granted the Governor in his instructions and commission.[117]

Hunter reported the situation fully to the Board of Trade and the members of that group passed the word along to the Earl of Dartmouth, who as Secretary of State for the Southern Department was responsible for colonial administration. To him the Board of Trade suggested that "this proceeding of the assembly of New York will be of very ill example to her Majesty's other Governments in America, who have most of them shewn too much inclination to assume pretended rights tending to an independency on the Crown of Great Britain." The Board recommended that Parliament "settle" a revenue in the Province of New York, but that body adjourned before the desired legislation could be passed.[118]

[116] *Ibid.*, 306–07.
[117] *Ibid.*, 308.
[118] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 359, 367.

Meanwhile Hunter had once more dissolved the Assembly and ordered new elections. This time, however, there was a contest. The principal issue was the defense of the royal prerogative against the encroachments of the Assembly. The Governor worked hard to secure the election of representatives who looked more favorably on royal government than had most of the members of the previous Assembly. In Ulster County Thomas Garton, who had been one of the most vigorous in asserting Assembly leadership, was not returned, but Henry Beekman, a more moderate opponent of the royal power, survived.[119]

Garton's replacement was Col. Jacob Rutsen, the Leislerian with whom Henry had cooperated in the matter of the Bolting Act and whom Henry had replaced as Common Pleas Judge for Ulster in 1702. The sealing of the old breech can be seen in that Rutsen, despite the continued political control of anti-Leislerians, had become a militia colonel and, on a more personal level, in that his son had married Henry Beekman's daughter shortly before the elections of 1713.[120]

The half-dozen changes brought about in the personnel of the Assembly by the election of 1713 seem to have had a more moderating effect than Hunter at first anticipated. Soon after the elections he had reported to England that "all the avowed opposers of her Majesty's interest are chosen again and avowedly for that end, for men of the best sence and figure have been rejected for the bare supposition that they would be for supporting the Government." His expectation that the life of the Assembly would be of "short duration," however, proved wrong. In a conciliatory mood the opposing forces agreed that

[119] *Assembly Journal*, I, 332.

[120] Roswell Randall Hoes (ed.), *Baptismal and Marriage Registers of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston* (New York: published by the editor, 1891), 527, 142; Gustave Anjou, *Ulster County, N. Y., Probate Records* (New York: Gustave Anjou, 1906), I, 106. Beverly McAnear in an unpublished doctoral dissertation on *Politics in Provincial New York, 1689–1761* (Stanford University, 1935, microfilm at Columbia University) leaves the impression that Henry Beekman, as a sort of political boss of Ulster County, was a lieutenant of Lewis Morris, a close ally of Robert Livingston, and the power behind the replacement of Garton by Rutsen in 1713. This interpretation is plausible, but the evidence seems quite inconclusive.

the Receiver General, an executive official, should receive authorization to collect and hold the funds from customs duties which were now renewed, but that the excises should be collected by the Assembly's treasurer.[121]

Henry Beekman seems to have taken very little part in the activities of this session. He is mentioned far less, for example, than Jacob Rutsen. Why he appears to have been so completely passed over in this instance is difficult to understand. Whether it was due to disagreement with the policies of the majority or to some other factor seems impossible to determine.[122]

The chief legislative concern of 1714 was an omnibus measure for paying off all the accumulated debts of the Province, which amounted to approximately £27,000. Most of the work on this measure was done in committee-of-the-whole with Lewis Morris, now back in the Assembly, presiding. For this reason it is again impossible to know what part Henry Beekman played in making basic decisions. However, Henry did serve as chairman of a committee to which one aspect of the knotty problem was referred. He and several others, including Robert Livingston and Major Schuyler, investigated in detail the accounts of several militia officers to determine what payment was due each. Their report, as accepted by the House on July 2, called for the payment of £3091 in all.[123]

The completed bill for the payment of all outstanding debts of the Province again indicated that the Assembly and the Governor had compromised their disagreements. Though the bill was clearly a "money" bill, the Assembly declared it not to be such and permitted the Council to amend it. More important, however, the act gave full administrative authority to the Assembly's treasurer who was to pay off the debts by bills of credit which he was to retire by means of the income from the recently imposed liquor excise tax.[124] The Crown's Receiver

[121] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 364; *Colonial Laws*, I, 779–80, 785–88, 789–91.

[122] The fact that Beekman was passed over for Rutsen might indicate that the McAnear interpretation (see note 120) is inapplicable.

[123] *Assembly Journal*, I, 361.

[124] *Colonial Laws*, I, 815–26.

General in New York was never to recover from the precedent confirmed in this measure.

The death of the Queen required that there be new elections in 1715, but, while the Albany and Westchester delegations were completely changed, Ulster County retained Beekman as always and Rutsen as in the previous election. This Assembly continued the compromise basis for working with the Governor by granting him a revenue bill to support the government for five years in return for his approval of a measure naturalizing all Protestant residents who were not born British subjects. Henry Beekman had no clearly visible role in this compromise, but he was among those naturalized. As a member of the joint Assembly-Council committee to draft a revision of the previous year's statute on the payment of colonial debts, Henry helped tear down certain legal obstacles which the act had unwittingly raised with regard to the filing of claims against the Province.[125]

Emigré South Carolinians, fleeing the Indian wars of that budding province, also had Henry Beekman to thank, in part, for a subsidy granted them by New York's Assembly. The purpose of the act was to exempt South Carolina immigrants from the duty imposed on the import of slaves. The act was carefully framed, however, to prevent the exemption from being employed by any but bona fide refugees with slaves who had been in their possession since before the war broke out. Even so, if the immigrant sold any slave in New York he was to pay a tax of £3 for each such slave sold.[126]

Once more in 1716 there were new elections for Assembly delegates. This time the cause was a technical one: new instructions for the Governor from George I. Henry was reelected of course and throughout the session was more active than usual, despite his sixty-four years. He was among those delegated to thank the Governor for his speech at the opening session of the Assembly; he served on the committee for griev-

[125] *Ibid.*, 847–58, 858–63; Zimm, *op. cit.*, *BB*, 52–55 (Henry is third from last in the long list); *Assembly Journal*, I, 369.

[126] *Assembly Journal*, I, 379; *Colonial Laws*, I, 884–85.

ances, presided in committee-of-the-whole during the discussion of the allowance to be granted representatives, acted as chairman of the House delegation to a joint committee on the farming of the excise, and helped, no doubt, in securing the appointment of his son-in-law, Johannes Rutsen, as Ulster County excise farmer.[127] The session ended September 1, 1716, with Henry seemingly still in full vigor, but the next known reference to him, only a few months later, is an order that his widow be paid his accumulated salary as Assemblyman.[128] The circumstances of Henry's death are not known, but it would indeed have been appropriate had he died on the floor of the Assembly for there were few if any in the Province who had contributed more than he to the establishment and growth of that remarkable institution.

Like all political leaders of his time Henry Beekman was a wealthy man. Just how wealthy he was is difficult to determine for there is no copy of his will and no inventory of his estate. However, to gain some idea of the amount and nature of his personal property let us examine the estate of his close contemporary and political ally, Thomas Garton, whose wealth was approximately the same as Henry Beekman's[129] according to the estimates of real and personal wealth found in the Ulster County tax list of 1709.

Garton's estate, when inventoried at his death, included 15 slaves (mostly children), 12 horses, 37 head of cattle, 20 swine, 14 sheep, 683 bushels of wheat, 52½ of rye, 136 of peas, 37½ of oats, 30 of corn. He possessed also in reasonable amounts

[127] *Assembly Journal*, I, 382, 388–89; *Colonial Laws*, I, 901–04.

[128] On January 21, 1717, the Ulster County Board of Supervisers ordered payment of £31 to his widow for his 104 days service in the last two Assembly sessions. *Assembly Journal*, I, 389–90; Works Progress Administration, Historical Records Survey, *Minutes of the Board of Supervisers of Ulster County, 1710 to 1730* (Albany: Historical Records Survey, 1939), 17.

[129] Ulster County tax lists for 1709 and a few scattered years after that are published in the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, vol. 62 (1931), p. 146 *ff*. (Completed in vol. 63). In this 1709 tax list Henry Beekman's real and personal property are valued at £400 (p. 147), Garton's at £395 (p. 273), and Jacob Rutsen's at £1000 (p. 150). The difference in tax valuation between Beekman and Garton on one hand and Rutsen on the other may reflect in part the fact that Rutsen had been, if he was not still in 1709, the leader of the minority political faction opposed to that of Beekman and Garton which was in power.

household goods, clothing, and farm equipment amounting with the items listed above to about £978 in all. There is no estimate of the value of his real property.[130]

There is considerable evidence as to the extent of Henry Beekman's real property holdings (although not of their value in money), but no indication at all of how much personal property he owned. There were, of course, few men in the Province and none in Ulster County, who had land-holdings comparable to those of Henry Beekman. In addition to the enormous holdings in Dutchess County Henry also owned scattered plots in Ulster County and lots in New York City.

Three years before his death Henry gave to his son, Henry, Junior, a portion of his holdings of real estate. An instrument dated May 6, 1713, transferred title of the southern area of the Rhinebeck patent to Henry, Junior, along with a "Corn mill" which was probably in the town of Rhinebeck. Other Dutchess County land identified only as "behind pochkepsinck" [Poughkeepsie?] was also to become the property of Henry, Junior, as were fifty acres in Ulster "near the place formerly called Rondout," six acres of meadowland near the falls of Rondout Creek, two plots in Kingston of five and four acres respectively, and a few smaller Kingston properties.[131]

In 1717, shortly after her husband's death, Johanna Lopers Beekman signed a document which in purporting to execute certain powers granted her in her husband's will explained in some degree the terms of that missing instrument. It was stated that Henry's will had provided "that his Loving wife should Injoy during her naturall Life of whatever She should please to keep in her hands of his Estate of Land, houses, mill[s?], negroes and what else She shall think fitt for her maintenance."

[130] Anjou, *op. cit.*, II, 108–09; NYHS *Collections*, *1893*, p. 188. Note that the estimated value given Garton's *personal* estate here is double that given for his *real and personal* property according to the tax evaluation (note 129). The date of this inventory cannot be established, but Garton was an old man in 1709 and it is unlikely that he lived much beyond that time (see NYHS *Collections*, *1893*, p. 123; *1897*, p. 70), or that he changed his fortune greatly in his last years. It seems more likely that tax valuations then as now were vastly under market valuations, perhaps particularly so for the property of dominant political leaders.

[131] Zimm, *op. cit.*, *BB*, 38.

Accordingly Johanna now granted unto her three children, Henry, Junior, Catharine, wife of Jonathan [Johannes?] Rutsen, and Cornelia, wife of Gilbert Livingston, all her right in the real estate belonging to her husband at his death except for certain reservations which she then made. She kept for her use during her lifetime "the house, barne, orchards, gardens, pastures and buildings standing in the Town of Kingston, . . . that house, brewhouse, ground and appurtenances which is standing in the Citty of New York, . . . the Corne-mill that stands on the south side of the Roundout Creek in the Corp[oration] K[ingston] with land and appurt[enances] . . ." and "all the Rents of the Land that is now Settled in Dutchess County."[132]

The papers of the descendants of Henry's younger brother, Gerardus, also indicate that Henry had inherited from his father forty-six lots of land in the area of Beekman and William Streets in New York City.[133] Thus from the combination of these three sources there is an indication of the minimum extent of Henry Beekman's holdings in real property. How much more he may have had cannot be determined, although it seems likely that these sources include all his holdings of importance.

Socially Henry Beekman probably stood at least as high as he did economically in the Province of New York. Although he himself had married in Johanna Lopers a woman of comparatively obscure family, Henry's children married into the "best" families of the Province. Henry, Junior, married first Janet Livingston, daughter of the nephew of Robert Livingston, first Lord of the Manor of Livingston, and after her death Gertrude Van Cortlandt, daughter of Stephen Van Cortlandt, Lord of the Manor of Van Cortlandt.[134] Cornelia, the younger of Henry's two daughters, married Gilbert Livingston, fourth son of the Lord of Livingston Manor.[135] In Dutchess County Gilbert Livingston was to become a lifelong business and political associate of his brother-in-law, Henry Beekman, Jr.

[132] *Ibid.*, 69.

[133] BFP, Box 17, F-1.

[134] *DAB* (Robert R. Livingston, 1718–1775); Anon., *The Van Cortlandt Manor* (Baltimore, 1920), 14–17.

[135] Florence Van Rensselaer, *The Livingston Family in America and Its Scottish Origins* (New York: 1949), 81.

Catharine Beekman, the elder daughter, had a more-checkered matrimonial career. Her first husband was a comparative unknown named Cornelius Exveen to whom she bore a son who was baptized September 11, 1709. What fate befell the Exveens, father and son, remains a mystery but in 1712, as has been mentioned, the widow Catharine married Johannes Rutsen, son of Colonel Jacob Rutsen. Johannes' will of 1725 gives evidence of a very high regard for both his wife and for her brother and sister whom he made contingent beneficiaries along with his own brother and sisters.[136]

Catharine's third husband was Albert Pawling, representative of another prominent land-owning family. Albert seems to have thought less of Catharine, or of her state of need, for his will of 1745 provided only £15 annually for her maintenance unless she should agree to live with his nephew on the estate. There is no record of her decision.[137]

Henry's social rank is of course indicated by other criteria as well. There was no higher rank in the Provincial militia than that which Henry enjoyed as colonel commanding the Ulster County forces. His lay religious leadership is shown in the episode involving Domine Beys. Furthermore there were few larger land grants in the Province than those of Henry Beekman and no man in Ulster could match Henry's office-holding record dating back to the Dongan Assembly of 1683; in the Assembly itself few were so regularly honored with important committee assignments.

An evaluation of Henry's political career is difficult to make. Although he participated in the remarkably anti-authoritarian Assembly of 1683, he also helped to suppress the Ulster County demonstrations in support of more local self-government and of bolting and overseas-trading privileges. He was moderately anti-Leislerian, but he was also on good terms with the Leislerian Jacob Rutsen and there is no indication that he repudiated his own more radical brother, Gerardus. He was co-author of repressive slave laws and of progressive tax legisla-

[136] Hoes, *op. cit.*, 85, 527; Anjou, *op. cit.*, I, 106.

[137] Anjou, *op. cit.*, II, 135–36.

tion. He was a vigorous opponent of corruption in government yet he was clearly involved in bribery at the time the Bolting Act was passed and it is difficult to believe that his enormous land grants required no quid pro quo. He stoutly defended the immunity of the Dutch Reformed Church from governmental controls and contributed materially to the growth of the Assembly's powers at the expense of royal officials; yet he was never among the most aggressive of the Assembly leaders. Although he was neither the wealthiest nor the most forceful leader in Ulster County, Henry held higher offices far more consistently than did any other. He must indeed have been a most likeable as well as a moderate and a flexible man.

4

GERARDUS BEEKMAN (1653-1723)

Chirurgeon, Revolutionary, and Acting Governor

GERARDUS, the second son of William Beekman, was one year younger than his brother, Henry. Like Henry he was born at the Corlaer's Hook "plantation" where he was baptized August 17, 1653,[1] and named in honor of his paternal great-grandfather, Gerardus Beekman of Cologne. Gerardus was five when his family moved to the less-civilized Delaware River area and eleven when the West India Company transferred his father to Esopus in 1664. It seems likely that Gerardus left Esopus for academic training or apprenticeship a few years later, although the family did not return to New York until 1671.

Gerardus Beekman's education centered on medicine. The New York Academy of Medicine has a complete manuscript copy in Beekman's hand of the original Dutch edition of the great medical textbook by Sylvius of Leyden which was published in 1672. This manuscript tome bears the signature of Gerardus and the date, November 20, 1674, when Gerardus was just twenty-one. It is uncertain, however, whether Gerardus actually went to study at Leyden, or merely copied the new masterpiece under the guidance of a New York doctor to whom he may have been apprenticed. The latter thesis seems the more plausible, for the published list of matriculated students at

[1] Thomas Grier Evans (ed.), *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New Amsterdam and New York, Baptisms* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1901), 35.

Leyden between 1575 and 1875 does not include Gerardus Beekman.[2] Then, too, Leyden graduates who practiced in New York were usually so identified and accorded more prestige than the doctors who had received their training locally. There is no evidence that his contemporaries accorded Beekman this special rank. The family financial status at that time and the Anglo-Dutch War which lasted from 1672 to 1674 also make it seem unlikely that Gerardus would have been sent abroad to study before 1674. Finally, book-copying was common as an economical as well as educational practice and the apprentice system was quite as much in vogue among the wealthy as among the poorer people. Had Gerardus Beekman undertaken a seven-year apprenticeship at the age of fourteen he would have finished on the date inscribed in his copy of the Sylvius textbook. Then, following the customary period of "assistancy" (roughly comparable perhaps to internship), he would have been ready to begin practicing himself as he did in Flatbush about 1677.[3]

Flatbush, then known as Midwout, was one of several Dutch towns at the western end of Long Island. Its population of less than a thousand engaged principally in agriculture. The farmers probably grew tobacco for export and barley for the New York brewhouses such as William Beekman's. The town had built its first church about 1655, but it still shared its minister with the neighboring Dutch communities. Its medical needs had been met for many years by an old ship's surgeon named Paulus Vander Beeck who died, however, about 1677,

[2] University of Leyden, *Album Studiosorum* (Hague: Martin Nyhoff, 1876).

[3] Robert William Innes Smith, *English Speaking Students of Medicine at the University of Leyden* (London: Oliver Boyd, 1932), xviii; William Frederick Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States Before the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 16: James J. Walsh, *History of Medicine in New York* (New York: National Americana Society, 1919), I, 25, 31, 33, 35, 43; James Grant Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York* (New York: New York History Co., 1892), IV, 389, 390; NYHS *Collections 1885*, 94; *Doc. Rel.*, III, 588; IV, 620, 726; *Ecc. Rec.*, II, 800, 871; Claude Edwin Heaton, "Medicine in New Amsterdam," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, IX (Feb., 1941), 143; Claude Edwin Heaton, "Medicine in New York During the English Colonial Period," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, XVII (Jan., 1945), 9, 28.

thus paving the way for the young surgeon, Gerardus Beekman, to move into a ready practice.[4]

Shortly after he commenced to practice in Flatbush Gerardus married Magdalena Abeel of Albany, October 25, 1677. Born the same year as her husband, Magdalena was the daughter of a master carpenter who had served as commissary for the Dutch West India Company in Albany shortly before the English conquest of 1664, a time when Gerardus' father occupied a similar position at Esopus. Albany business records make frequent mention of Abeel's name, although he was a man of only modest wealth when he died in 1684.[5]

In Flatbush, despite his youth and his apparent lack of previous association with the community, the young Dr. Beekman moved quickly into the higher social circles. He became a deacon in the consistory of the Flatbush Dutch church at once and within a few years advanced to the post of elder. In 1685 he became a justice of the peace for Kings County and the next year he received his commission as captain of the Flatbush militia company. Meanwhile he acquired a small piece of property not far from the church, fathered several children, and in 1687 became a naturalized citizen in company with sixty-nine of his fellow townsmen.[6]

Near the end of the decade of the 80's the routine of Dr. Beekman's life at Flatbush was broken by a series of events following upon the birth of a son to the Queen of England. Until the arrival of this child, the heir to the throne of James II

[4] Thomas M. Strong, *The History of the Town of Flatbush in Kings County* (New York: 1842), *passim*; Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y. from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1884), I, 414–15.

[5] Jonathan Pearson (ed. and transl.), *Early Records of the City and County of Albany and Colony of Rensselaerswyck, 1656–1675* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1869), 70, 326 *ff.*, *passim*.

[6] Frank L. Van Cleef (ed.), *Baptisms from the Records of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the Town of Flatbush, Kings County, New York* (Unpublished, carbon copy in The New-York Historical Society, 1912), I, 15, 20, 34, 43, 56, 82; Frank L. Van Cleef (ed.), *Flatbush Town Records* (Unpublished, carbon copy in Long Island Historical Society, 1911), 6, 22; Stiles, *op. cit.*, I, 415; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 141, 147; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 45: Holland Society of New York, *Yearbook, 1896* (New York, 1896), 159.

had been his daughter, Mary, who had been reared as a Protestant by her now-deceased mother, the King's first wife. Mary was already wedded to the champion of European Protestants, William of Orange. The new heir was the child of the King's second wife, a Catholic. Such was the nature of the rivalry of Europe's two major religions and of its two chief powers, Protestant England and Catholic France, that before a month had elapsed from the birth date of the Catholic heir the English Protestant leaders had invited Mary's husband to become the English monarch in place of James II.

In November of 1688 William landed with an army in Devonshire and before Christmas he had won complete control. In February, according to the Declaration of Right which a quickly summoned Parliament had passed, William and Mary became joint sovereigns of the realm. Limited monarchy and Protestantism were both secure in England.

In New York as reports of the Glorious Revolution became known, the people, dimly perceiving its direction, initiated parallel movements of their own. They were irked that James II had eliminated the representative Assembly which he had granted them as Duke of York. Fearing French attack, they were suspicious, too, of "papistical" intrigue on the part of certain of their Provincial officials who were "easy" Anglicans or even frankly Catholic.

On March 1, 1689, news reached New York of William's landing on the shores of England. Before the end of April New Yorkers learned that Edmond Andros, the arbitrary governor of the new and highly centralized Dominion of New England which included all British territories north of the Delaware, had been arrested in Boston on suspicion of papist plotting. Similar feelings against Francis Nicholson, the Dominion's lieutenant-governor, who then resided at New York, found more frequent expression. Then on May 30 an intemperate and unmeant threat on the part of that young soldier to burn the town rather than see it fall into the possession of the radical Protestant militia leaders prompted those individuals to act. With Nicholson and the nominal militia commander, Colonel Bayard,

offering only verbal resistance, the lesser militia leaders of New York City under Captain Jacob Leisler took over the fort and established a Committee of Safety to protect the City from the threat of French invasion and Catholic intrigue.[7]

Among the delegates to the Committee of Safety from the various communities in the New York City area was Gerardus Beekman. He and Myndert Coerten were elected as representatives by the voters of Kings County.

Beekman and Coerten apparently did not attend the first meeting of the Committee. Their signatures are not among those of the Committee members who acted on June 28 to appoint Leisler "captain" of the fort and they probably took no part in the decision of the same day to make Peter Delanoy Collector of Customs even though the Council members, in whose hand Lieutenant-Governor Nicholson had left the government when he departed for England to "report" the situation, had made other provisions for the office from which a Catholic had been removed.[8]

The second meeting of the Committee of Safety, which Gerardus apparently did attend, commenced on July 22. It heard testimony, at least a part of which had been sworn before Gerardus as justice of the peace, that in April the Anglican minister, Mr. Innes, had been heard to "commend Canada and several Jesuits." In the same testimony it was also reported that Innes had said "that the Jesuits were good people, . . . that the Catholic Romish religion was the best religion, that all that left it were heretics, that the common people should not be allowed the Scripture and that auricular confession was a necessity." No specific action resulted from this testimony, and, after several days of legislative-executive action directed to financial and military problems, the Committee adjourned once more until mid-August.[9]

The August meeting of the Committee heard testimony, sworn in three separate depositions before Gerardus, that

[7] See Stokes, IV, *passim*, and Van Rensselaer and Brodhead histories.

[8] *Calendar of State Papers, 1689–1692*, 75, 81, 126; *Doc. Rel.*, III, 594 *ff.*, 738; Osgood, *17th Century*, III, 458.

[9] *Calendar of State Papers, 1689–1692*, 100, 127.

Governor Andros had planned with the Indians for an attack upon "the Christians at Manhattan." Andros of course harbored no such intention, although the French had planned attacks upon the Province both by land and sea. Convinced that attack impended either by the French, by Catholic fifth-columnists, or both, the Committee of Safety now "promoted" Leisler to be commander-in-chief. Under his crude but dynamic leadership the Province prepared for war with a vigor which it had never known before in any of its many crises.[10]

As a member of the Committee of Safety Gerardus undoubtedly contributed to the defense-planning but he provided individually identifiable services to the movement principally as justice of the peace. Leisler complained in a letter to the King and Queen that none of the New York City justices would administer to the military personnel or the civilian officeholders the oath of fidelity to William and Mary. Consequently he had been forced, Leisler recounted, to bring over Gerardus Beekman from Long Island to achieve that purpose. It is probable, too, that no New York City justice could have been induced to take such depositions as Beekman did against Andros and the Anglican minister. Nor would those justices have added, as Beekman now did, another deposition to the effect that the now-departed Lieutenant-Governor Nicholson had been seen to kneel at Mass in 1686 while serving in England under James II.[11]

In December there arrived from England new instructions addressed to Lieutenant-Governor Nicholson, or "in his absence to such as for the time being take care for preserving the peace and administering the laws in our said Province of New York in America." These instructions were dated July 30, before Nicholson arrived in England, but they were not actually dispatched until after his arrival.[12] Thus, had the authorities in England considered the matter important, they would certainly have been able to change the instructions to provide more specifically who was to rule in New York. In any case the royal messenger himself hesitated only slightly before handing these

[10] *Ibid.*, 121, 127; Osgood, *17th Century*, III, 460–61.

[11] *Calendar of State Papers, 1689–1692*, 130.

[12] Van Rensselaer, II, 427–32.

instructions to Leisler, the *de facto* Governor, rather than to the New York members of the Dominion Council who also appeared to claim them. Thus encouraged in his pretensions to legitimacy, Leisler assumed the title of "Lieutenant-Governor," seated himself in the Governor's pew in church, and acted henceforth as the duly commissioned agent of their Majesties.[13]

This increase in Leisler's stature also elevated that of his supporters. Three days after the arrival of the royal instructions, Beekman attended a meeting of the old Committee of Safety which was now convened as the Provincial Assembly "By appointment of the Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of their Majesties Province of New York." Because it was customary for the Governor to be advised by a Council and because the new instructions at least did not forbid such action, Leisler and his "Assembly" now named a new Council of eight members, which included Gerardus and several other Committee-of-Safety veterans.

Gerardus was also appointed to other offices. Within a month of the creation of Leisler's Council Beekman received appointment to a special court of Oyer and Terminer for New York City. He was promoted also from captain to major in the militia and placed in command of all the foot and horse in Kings County, apparently about six companies in all. Commissioned anew as justice of the peace for Kings County, Gerardus administered the oath of that office to each of the other justices appointed in the County.[14]

Throughout the year 1690 Gerardus continued to participate actively as a Council member in the Leisler government. As a Council member Beekman shared responsibility for arresting and imprisoning Bayard, for summoning a representative Assembly like that of 1683, and for convening an inter-colonial convention at New York which created the first inter-colonial military force outside New England.

Major Beekman seems to have played little part in the

[13] *Ibid.*, 430; Brodhead, II, 592. The Brodhead interpretation is very hostile to Leisler whereas Van Rensselaer's is friendly and, to this writer, more credible.

[14] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 27, 29; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 190, 192.

Duplicate.

No 5 – 2 f

Sir

Whitehall 10. Nov.r 1709.

The Queen having thought fit to order the sending of Three Thousand Palatines to New York, has commanded me to acquaint you with it & to tell you that they are to sail from hence about the 15.th of next Month, to the end that you may consult with Her Majesty's Council there upon the proper measures to be taken for providing for these poor People at their Arrival in your Parts both as to Lodging and Provisions. Her Majesty does particularly recommend this to your Care, and has commanded me to let you know that the Expence of it will be answered from hence; Her Majesty's Intention being that these People should in no wise become a Burthen to your Colony. I am

Sir

Your most humble Servant

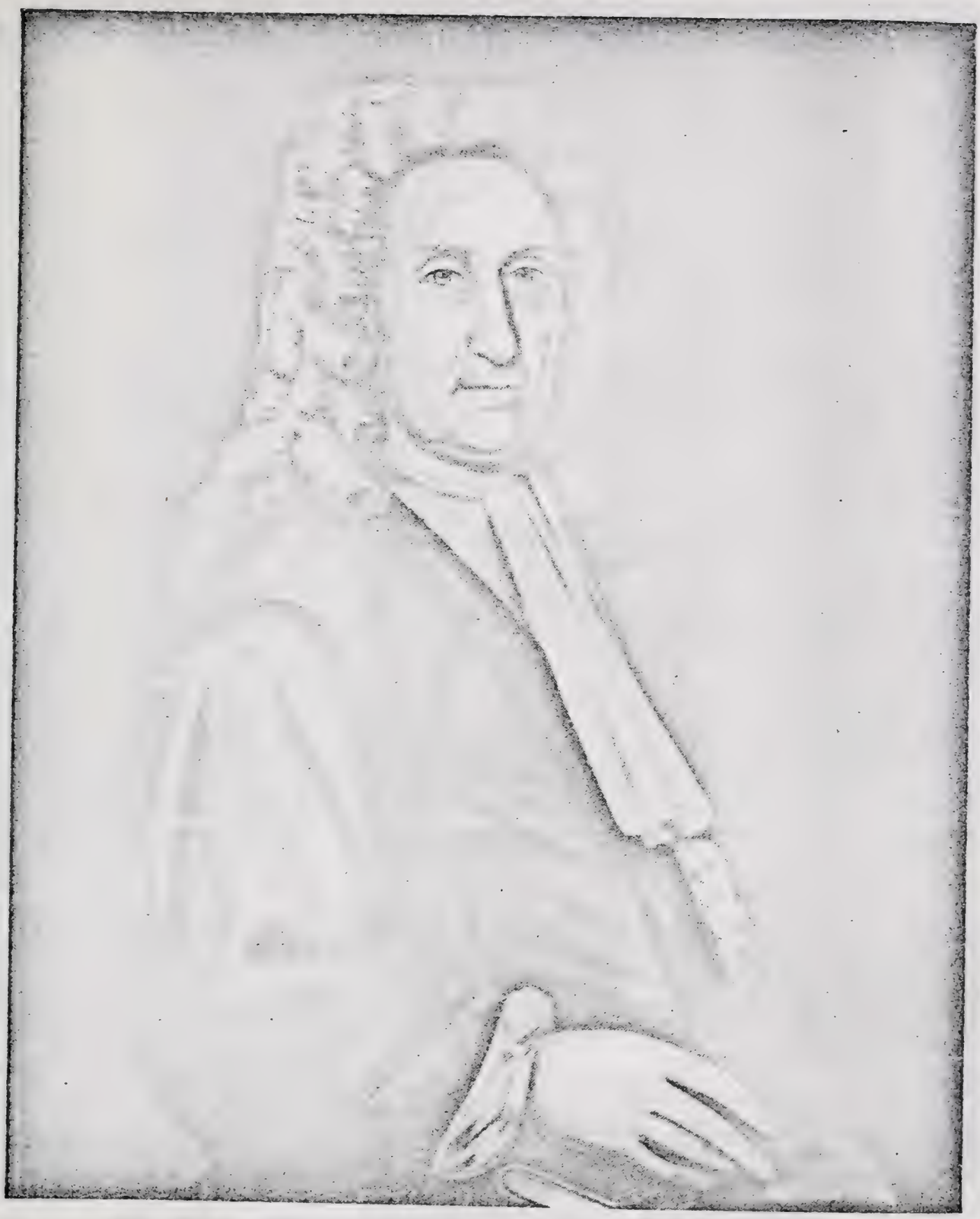
Sunderland

Gerard Beekman
President of the Council at New York.

18. QUEEN ANNE'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ACTING GOVERNOR GERARD[US] BEEKMAN

Regarding the reception of the Palatines in New York, dated 1709

From the Beekman Family Papers, Volume I
On permanent deposit at The New-York Historical Society



19. COL. GERARDUS BEEKMAN (1653–1723)

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1710

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, his great-great-great-great-grandson

[Gerardus, a son of William Beekman (1623–1707) who founded the family in America, was a physician, Provincial Councilor, and Acting Governor of New York]

20. MRS. GERARDUS (MAGDALEN ABEEL) BEEKMAN
(1661–1730)

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1710

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, her great-great-great-great-grandson

[From Col. and Mrs. Gerardus Beekman, through their son Dr. William Beekman (1684–1770) and his son Beekman (1732–1807), came the present Beekmans of New York]

21. DR. WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1684–1770)

Son of Col. Gerardus and Magdalen Abeel Beekman
and father of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1720

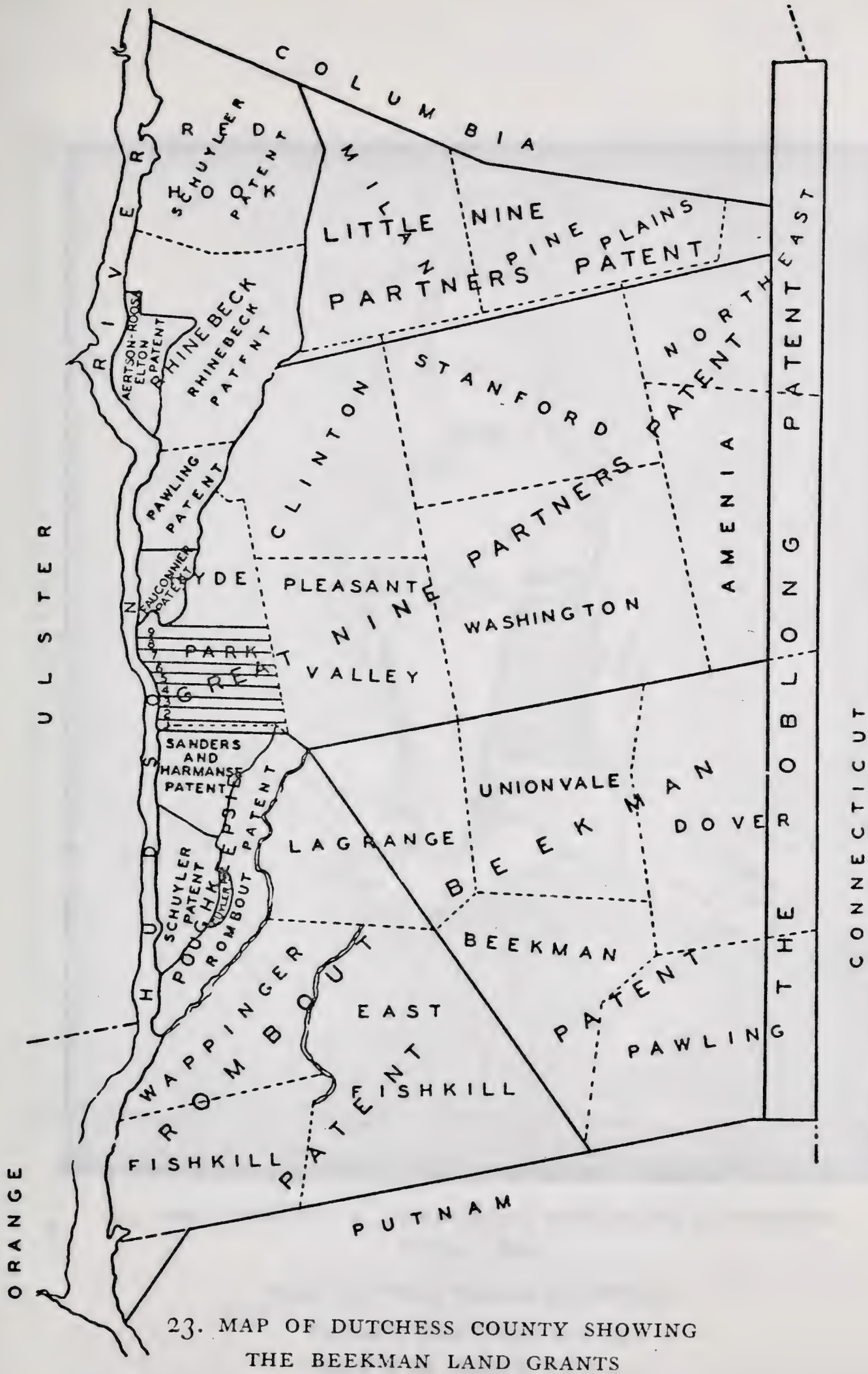
Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, his great-great-great-grandson

22. MRS. WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1691–1765)

(Catharine Peters Delanoy)
Mother of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1720

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, her great-great-great-grandson



23. MAP OF DUTCHESS COUNTY SHOWING THE BEEKMAN LAND GRANTS

With the 17th- and 18th-century patents superimposed on present townships

Drawn by Emmet K. Hosier, based on historical documents

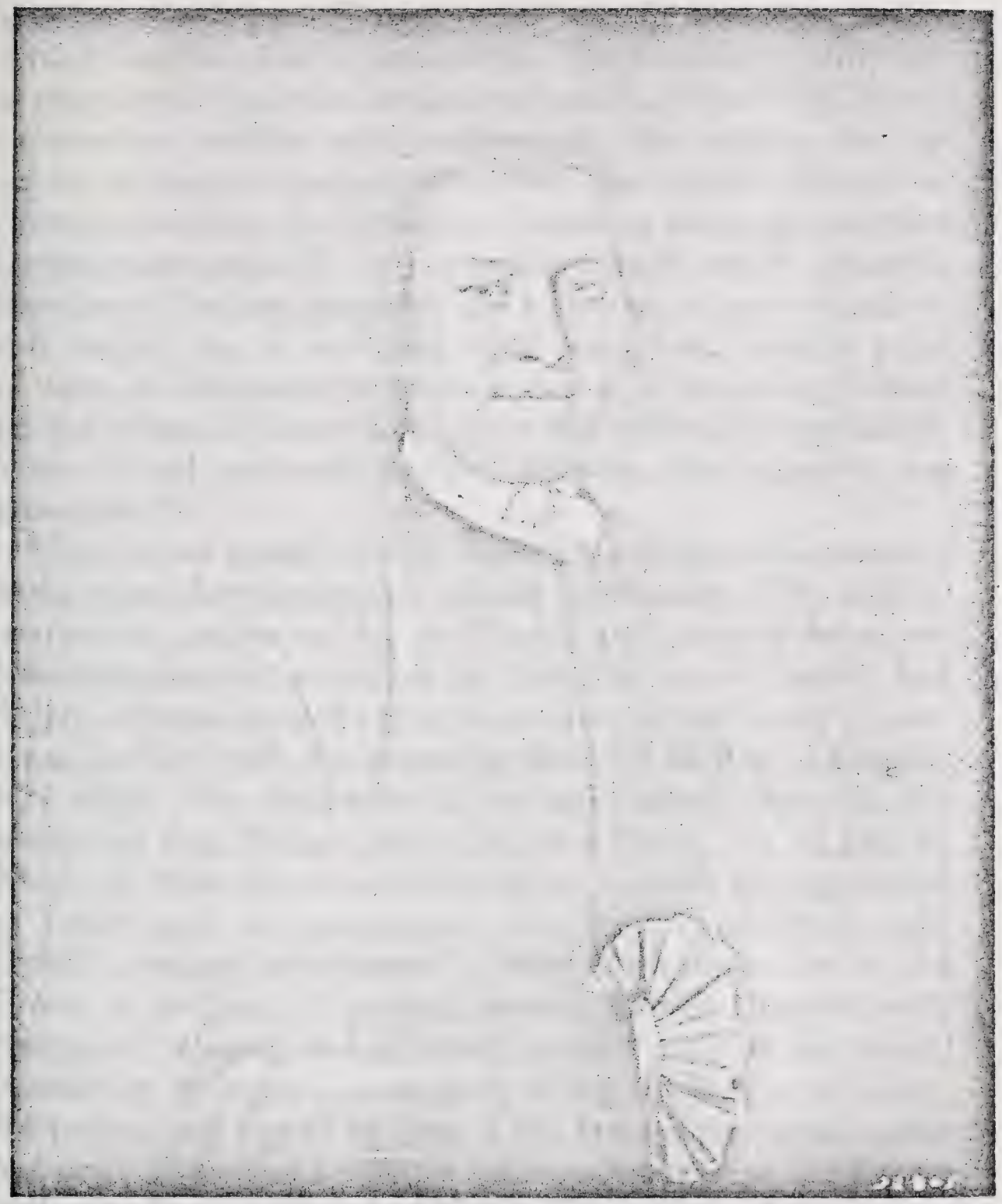
From Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook for 1939

24. MRS. ROBERT R. (MARGARET BEEKMAN) LIVINGSTON (1724–1800)

Daughter of Henry Beekman II (1688–1776)

Portrait by John Wollaston, *c.* 1752

Owned by Mr. Robert R. Livingston



25. GERARD G. BEEKMAN, JR. (1746–1822)

Son of Gerard G. Beekman (1719–1797), the merchant,
who was a grandson of Col. Gerardus Beekman (1653–1723)

Portrait by John Mare, *c.* 1769

Owned by the Historical Society of the Tarrytowns

abortive attack upon Canada, which this force made,[15] but indirectly it affected him considerably. The revenue requirements of the planned Canadian invasion induced Leisler and his Council to summon another popular Assembly. By securing the approval of elected representatives from the various districts for revenue measures the Leislerians hoped to make the financial burden more palatable to the public than it would otherwise have been. The new Assembly did cooperate to some extent in this respect, but it also took what was, from Leisler's point of view, an unreasonable position in that it accepted petitions for the release of those whom Leisler had arbitrarily imprisoned. When it had answered Leisler's purpose, the Assembly was prorogued.[16]

Thus by late spring of 1690 Gerardus and his colleagues had antagonized large segments of the population. The original usurpation, supported by pro-Dutch and pro-popular-representation elements as well as by hysterical anti-Catholics, had deeply offended the old ruling class. Now the arbitrary character of Leisler's rule, the mounting financial burden of his military efforts, the abatement of the anti-Catholic hysteria, the realization that William was to be not a Dutch, but an English King—all these factors contributed to increase the opposition to Leisler and his government. On May 19 thirty-six self-styled "principal inhabitants" of New York dispatched to the Crown a petition of protest against Leisler. Replete with charges of "slavery and arbitrary power," rule by the sword, plundering of houses, assumption of his Majesty's authority, the protest was signed by four of the five militia captains who had originally aided Leisler in taking command of the fort as well as by Domine Varick of Flatbush, another early supporter of the Leislerian movement.[17] On June 6 a mob attacked Leisler in the street and failed only narrowly in its attempt to murder him.[18]

Gerardus Beekman may have done some soul-searching at

[15] Brodhead, II, 620 *ff*.
[16] Van Rensselaer, II, 465.
[17] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 748–9; see also Brodhead, II, 619.
[18] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 739 *ff*.

these evidences of Leisler's unpopularity, but he remained faithful. Some two weeks after Leisler's escape from the mob Gerardus signed a lengthy report which Leisler and his Council forwarded to the Earl of Shrewsbury on the conduct of land and naval operations against the French.[19] Later he brought action against Domine Varick who had been jailed "for speaking treasonable words against Captain Leisler and the Fort." The Leislerian commission which heard the case barred Domine Varick from further ministerial activity and ordered him confined until a fine of £80 had been paid. However, upon due supplication to Leisler the Domine obtained release.[20]

In the fall of 1690 Gerardus was named with five others to serve on a commission of Oyer and Terminer under Peter Delanoy. On October 26 the Court of Oyer and Terminer for Kings County was suspended "until the rebels in the counties of Long Island be reduced to obedience." That the rebels were not quickly reduced is evident in that on November 4 Gerardus and other militia leaders received commissions to hold court martial at Flatbush.[21] The Leisler revolution was not going well.

Meanwhile the Bayard supporters had out-lobbied the Leislerian representative in London. The newly appointed Governor and all of his Council members were hostile to the Leislerians. The days of the Leisler government were numbered when Governor Sloughter set sail from England.

Unfortunately for the Leislerians Sloughter's ship fell behind that which bore Major Ingoldesby and the military forces under his command. Convinced by his own pretensions to legitimacy, Leisler made no effort to meet or to greet Ingoldesby when he arrived. Instead he waited for the new arrival to present credentials. Leisler's enemies, unencumbered by considerations of prestige, immediately consulted with Ingoldesby and thus implanted in his mind a further prejudice against the "rebel" leader. Urged on by Leisler's enemies, Ingoldesby on January 30 peremptorily demanded possession of the fort and

[19] *Ibid.*, 731–33.

[20] Stiles, *op. cit.*, I, 169; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 198; Brodhead, II, 624–25; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 247.

[21] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 173; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 199.

warned that "if you refuse . . . I must esteem you no friend to their Majesties. . . ."[22] In fact Ingoldesby possessed no instructions from Sloughter or from the Crown save a commission as commander of a company of soldiers. When Leisler learned this and that the new Council was composed entirely of his enemies, he declined to surrender his control of the fort until proper authority could be presented. He could still hope for respectful treatment from the Governor himself, but Ingoldesby seemed already to be merely the tool of the Bayard faction.

Accordingly Leisler wrote on February 1 to "Major Gerardus Beekman and all the military officers and other the inhabitants of Kings County on Long Island" to state that he was "credibly informed that the forces on board a certain ship arrived from England . . . are ordered to be landed upon Long Island." Should this happen, he continued, his followers were to "Entertain them with all Courtesy . . . provided they appeare not in hostility neither commit unlawful acts . . . or breake the peace. . . ." He ordered further that no commands but his own should be observed until the arrival of further orders from his Majesty. Meanwhile they were to keep the militia ready to move and to inform Leisler of the "behaviour" of Ingoldesby's forces.[23]

Ingoldesby landed at last not on Long Island, but on Manhattan, where he secured quarters for his troops in the City Hall and an adjacent city building, as Leisler still refused to admit him to the fort. Gerardus was thus relieved of much responsibility, but he continued to have difficulty, as Leisler's chief lieutenant and military commander on Long Island, in keeping order among the restless people while the two rival forces argued and recruited soldiers in New York. As the tension heightened in New York, Gerardus on March 12 took upon himself the responsibility for issuing the following proclamation:[24]

BROTHERS and beloved Subjects of their Majesties in Queens Kounty!

We are informed and have remarked that the parties in New Yorck are

[22] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 181 *ff.*
[23] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 301.
[24] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 189.

now so violent that the danger of the whole County being bathed in blood is most imminent; and as many of the Chiefs on both sides call for Peace, it is therefore considered by many as the best and only means for King's County and Queens County to proceed all together tomorrow at noon to the Ferry and to write together a Peace address, that all private questions may remain in *statu quo* and each continue in his place until the arrival of the Governor Slater or his Majesties further orders and that on both sides each shall allow his people [those mobilized] to depart to their homes.

We sincerely trust that it will be signed by both parties such as we have given some idea of it for we must act herein as a third party. It is our earnest request, and we testify also herein our innocence of any bloodshed and all mischiefs which may arise through neglect of their duty.

Your affectionate friend

Kings County Flatbush March 12 $169\frac{0}{1}$ G. Beekman Major

What came of this proclamation is not clear but apparently no general accord was reached in the two counties even if the meeting did in fact take place.

Sometime within the next few days after issuing this proclamation Gerardus joined Leisler at the fort. Perhaps he arrived in time to participate in preparing a lengthy "Declaration" setting forth many serious and some absurd charges against Ingoldesby. This document, which was issued March 16, called upon Ingoldesby and his allies to disband the assembled forces which were by then virtually besieging the fort, or to accept responsibility for all consequences of failure to do so.[25]

On March 17 Ingoldesby made public a reply which denied the accusations. Shortly afterwards firing broke out. Anti-Leislerians said the soldiers in the fort had fired, unprovoked, upon the King's forces "in their parade." Leislerians insisted that Ingoldesby's troops had first fired upon a boat bringing men, possibly including Gerardus, from Long Island to the fort. There were other versions, too, of how the firing started, but in whatever manner it commenced some few men were killed and many wounded.[26]

[25] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 306–09; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 193–96.

[26] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 316 *f.*; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 196; *Doc. Rel.*, III, 760; Van Rensselaer, II, 517.

Next day Sloughter's ship at last arrived at the Narrows and on March 19 in ceremonies at City Hall the new Governor made public his commission and swore in those of the newly appointed Council members who were not Leisler's prisoners in the fort. In his desire to gain assurance of satisfactory conditions for surrender, Leisler delayed still longer in giving up the fort. When he finally did so on March 20, he and his Council members were placed under arrest.

The role of Gerardus Beekman in the foregoing drama is far from clear. He was among those who were made prisoners at the surrender of the fort, but there is no indication as to when he arrived. He later declared that he had come to attempt to dissuade Leisler from acting too precipitously against the rival forces, but in view of the circumstances in which he made that statement (see below) one should consider also the possibility that he came to bring reinforcements to his beleaguered chief.

Such evidence as there is, however, seems to lend credibility to Gerardus' own statement. It is perfectly consistent with the spirit of his proclamation of March 12 which contrasts strongly with Leisler's more bellicose declaration of March 16. In fact, the author of the former statement, upon learning of the later one, might well have felt impelled at whatever risk to join the commander in the fort in order to urge caution upon him. Were this the case, Beekman in journeying by boat from Long Island to the fort on March 17 may have been the target at which, according to the Leislerians, Ingoldesby's men fired the shots which touched off the fighting.

When they appeared before Sloughter, Gerardus and the other Leislerian leaders asked for a hearing as soon as they had had time to "prepare themselves." Meanwhile they asked "Suspencon of other Proceedings against them[selves]." They asserted further, in opposition to the view of some of the Governor's advisers, that they had not held the fort "for some ill designe," but that they had done so "until yourselfe appeared, whose arrivall was with paine longed for to discharge them and heale those unhappy troubles which haue arrisen since Major

Ingoldesby came hither."[27] In a second petition the nine prisoners asked to be permitted to make "seasonable Addresses" to Sloughter, impliedly to ameliorate "their present circumstances—occasioned (as they suppose) through harsh informacons."[28]

On March 31 Gerardus along with Leisler, Milborne, Gouverneur, and Delanoy was twice indicted, once for murder, once for treason. The murder charge arose from the death of a laborer named Josias Brown who had been shot, allegedly by Gouverneur, during the excitement on March 17. Beekman pleaded not guilty to the charge of complicity in this alleged crime, as did the others save for Leisler and Milborne who refused to enter pleas to either charge until the legality of their government had been determined. Gouverneur was promptly convicted although Delanoy was acquitted. Beekman never came to trial on the murder charge. This good fortune was probably attributable to the feeling of the prosecution that it had a stronger case against him on the other charge.[29]

Gerardus also pleased not guilty to the treason charge against him. His trial for treason took place on April 6. In the morning Gerardus asked for a delay until the afternoon when witnesses in his favor would arrive to testify. With or without such testimony, the jury that same afternoon found the defendant guilty.

The others, save for Delanoy, fared no better. Two days after Beekman's conviction Delanoy again won a verdict of innocence. Historians have suspected bribery but the verdict may have been simply a tribute to his prestige and to his reputation for moderation.

Four other Leislerian leaders were promptly convicted, but Leisler and Milborne still refused to enter a plea. Nevertheless on April 17 the court pronounced sentences upon Leisler,

[27] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 62; *Calendar of State Papers, 1689–1692*, 397; NYHS *Collections 1868*, 405; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 203.

[28] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 204.

[29] Lawrence H. Leder (ed.), "Records of the Trials of Jacob Leisler and His Associates," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, XXVI (October, 1952), 431–57.

Milborne, Beekman and the four others for treason and upon Gouverneur for murder.

The sentence for those guilty of treason, a standard one, provided that "they shal be . . . hanged by the Neck and being Alive their bodys be Cutt Downe to the Earth that their Bowells be taken out and they being Alive burnt before their faces that their heads shall be struck off and their Bodys Cutt in four parts and which shall be Desposed of as their Majesties shall Assigne." Gouverneur, a mere murderer, was to be hanged by the neck until dead.[30]

About the time of his conviction Gerardus attempted to dissociate himself from Leisler. In a petition to Governor Sloughter he stated:[31]

> . . . being by the people of Kings Countie . . . C[h]osen to bee their representitives in A Comitie of safetie, which he with Abundance of Intreatie and persuasion, absolutely supposeing that itt was for their Majestys Interest and safetie of the Land acted to the best of his knowledge, without any self end or treacherous reservation; And the reason of his raiseing forces to bring into the fort was to noe other intent, but as he was bound by oath and allegance to keepe the same for their Majestys . . . till their full and absolute power Came to demand the same; not as itt hath through the Malice of A Colerick man happened to use hostilitie against their Majestys good subjects, for his sole intent in Coming last into the fort was to persuade Lyslar from such base and inhuman actions being soe much Contrary to what he the said Lyslar alwayes pretended to him your petitioner soe that he hopes you will be pleas[d] rightly to apprehend his true intent in the matter and pardon what for want of knowledge he hath Committed, who promised fidelitie and allegance to their Majestys and all their Lawfull substitutes. . . .

Beekman's petition concluded with a request that he be released on bail so that he could visit "several patients on Long Island very dangerous." Apparently he still practiced medicine.

To this appeal of her husband's Magdalena Beekman now added an even more forceful statement. At the beginning of the "Alteracon of Government," she said, her husband was a justice of the peace and a militia captain on Long Island. Be-

[30] *Idem.*

[31] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 209.

cause of this position of leadership, she implied, "the people was verry urgent and desireous that he . . . should appeare as their representative in A Commitie of safetie to Act for King William and Queen Maryes Interest and their own safetie against their enemies." Further he was "dayly perswaded by the minister of that place that he Cold not deny itt with honest and A good Conscience." Now, however, Magdalena asserted, her husband with "true Contrition" plainly sees that he "hath been mislead." With the confidence of a loving wife Magdalena also assured the Governor that Gerardus would in the future "beware how he acts." She played heavily, too, on the theme that Gerardus' sole purpose in going to the fort "these late times" was to "appease the wrath and raged designe of Lyslar being privie to all his designes and Contrivances; which he hath in A great measure mittigated as He Cann if consulted more largly demonstrate." In a last wifely touch Magdalena heartily prayed a little better accommodation for her husband until the Governor's answer to her plea for exoneration could be made known.[32]

In addition to that assistance which he received in this emergency from his very active wife, Gerardus also had intangible aid in the form of family prestige. His father, who had resigned from Leisler's Assembly,[33] was elected within a week of Sloughter's arrival as alderman for the East Ward of New York City.[34] Then on April 10 Gerardus' brother, Henry, came to town to serve as representative for Ulster County in the new Assembly which had been granted in the Governor's instructions.[35] If Henry was of any help to Gerardus it was behind the scenes, however, for no overt act of Henry's to help his brother can be shown.

William Beekman, on the other hand, acted quite directly. Although conviction of treason in those times required the forfeiture of all one's property to the state, Gerardus still had in his possession ten days after his conviction some 400 bushels

[32] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 209.
[33] *Ibid.*, II, 159.
[34] *Minutes of Common Council*, I, 213–14.
[35] *Assembly Journal*, I, 2.

of grain which he alleged he had sold some two months previously to a Manhattan miller. The reported purchaser apparently had made no payment for he did not protest when Sloughter seized the grain. On the other hand William Beekman gave Sloughter a bond for £100 which was to be payable only if the grain were not confiscated. On the day that Beekman's bond was executed the miller received authorization to take away the grain.[36] This may have been a legitimate transaction; it may have disguised a bribe.

Shortly afterwards Magdalena Beekman received permission "to use and enjoy the goods and chattels of her husband. . . ." This may have been a magnanimous gesture, or it may have been part of a cash transaction.[37]

Sloughter, it seems obvious, had no great desire to execute all those who had been sentenced to die. He wrote, in fact, that "by the advice of the Judges I was inclined to reprieve them until his Majesty's pleasure should be known, but the people were so much disturbed thereat and the Council and Assembly did represent to me the . . . discouragement to future loyalty if the law was not executed upon the principal Actors which I was constrained to do and on the 17th of May Leisler and Milbourne were accordingly executed."[38] The more grisly aspects of the sentence, however, were omitted; the victims were merely hanged and beheaded.

With the death of Leisler and Milborne extremist pressure upon Sloughter to execute the other prisoners so sentenced lessened greatly. Even after the death of Sloughter himself when the government fell into the hands of Ingoldesby and the Council, little sentiment appeared in favor of carrying out the death sentence upon the other prisoners. The explanation lies in part in Europe. In October 1691 the King of England received from five prominent residents of The Hague, three of whom had jumped bail in New York after having been indicted on charges of Leislerian activity, a very impressive statement of the case in favor of the imprisoned Leislerians. They asked

[36] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 210; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 204.

[37] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 205.

[38] *Doc. Rel.*, III, 789.

not only a stay of execution, but also that the prisoners be freed on bail "until their Majesties shall be fully informed of all these matters, which they will then be able to dispose of according to equity."[39]

Furthermore young Jacob Leisler, Jr., having made his way to London, presented to the King in Council January 7, 1692, another able brief in behalf of the "condemned rebels at New York." Passed on to the Lords of Trade and Plantations for study and report Leisler's brief became the basis for a resolution passed by that body on April 1 recommending the pardon of Abraham Gouverneur, Gerard Beekman and four others, condemned as accomplices of Leisler. Six days later an order of the Queen in Council declared the Queen's intention to pardon Gouverneur, Beekman and the four others "on their application for the same."[40]

Upon learning of this favorable order of the Queen in Council the prisoners, protesting that they had been "unjustly tryed and condemned for some pretended high treason," petitioned the Queen for pardon and restoration of their estates.[41] No answer to this petition had been received when Governor Sloughter's successor, Benjamin Fletcher, arrived in New York in August, 1692. Gerardus Beekman's version of what transpired then is preserved in the following deposition which he made before his father two years later:

> That at the arrival of the governor Benjamin Fletcher to New Yorke the prisonner brought under Condemnation delivered to him a petition, with congratulation and gladness of his arrival, hoping he came with their majesties order to release them of their miserable confeynment. . . . Whereupon he called this deponent and Abraham Gouverneur at the Citty Hall in the presence of Colonel Abraham dePeyster and Sheriffe Thomas Codingston the 31st August, 1692 and did say, you have petitioned to me without my Councill. I know they are your enemies, but I must rule the Country with them, you do justify yourselves in the petition, but their Majesties have disapproved and very ill taken the actions of Leisler, you are under the law and sentence of death, in cause you will not acknowledge by petition to me and Council your fault I shall execute the law against

[39] *Ibid.*, III, 809–12; *Supreme Court*, II, 4.

[40] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 331–332; *Calendar of State Papers, 1689–1692*, 616, 619.

[41] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 333.

you. . . . I have no order from their Majesties to set you at Liberty and shall write against you and Stop all what shall come in your favour, but in case you do it [sign a petition confessing guilt and asking pardon] I shall release you. . . .[42]

Under threat of death, then, the prisoners on September 1 signed a petition imploring "their Majesties Mercy, and Comiseracon for our lives and estates" which they had been condemned to forfeit "for treasonable and fellonious crimes which God knowes we have not comitted obstinately but meaning well and Ignorantly." They asked the Governor to make application in their behalf to their Majesties and meanwhile to permit them after seventeen months of imprisonment "to be set at liberty and peaseable enjoyment of our estates and families untill their Majesties Pleasure shall arrive."[43]

Fletcher's demands, certainly harsh in view of the Order in Council of the Queen, probably reflected principally his desire to ingratiate himself with the anti-Leislerian faction whose cooperation he desired for profiteering purposes. Another motivation is suggested by the author of the pro-Leisler tract, "Loyalty Vindicated." Whoever he was, the writer asserted that although the Queen herself had ordered the prisoners pardoned, Fletcher "did it as an act of grace of his *own*, and told them that although he released them yet he could call for them when he pleased, and hang them." If Fletcher's purpose was not clear then, says "Loyalty Vindicated," it became so some time later when he told them "That they dealt worse by him than the Lepers cleansed by our Saviour, some of which returned to thank him, but none of them ever did, meaning none of them had given him a wicked Bribe or reward which he was used to receive. These Truths Mr. *Beekman* and Mr. *Gouverneur* will attest."[44]

Gerardus and his fellow prisoners did win a provisional liberty by the signing of this confession of guilt and petition for pardon on September 1, 1692. Within two months young

[42] *Ibid.*, 347–48.
[43] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 227; *Doc. Hist.*, II. 235.
[44] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 390.

Gouverneur was off for London to begin undermining the dominant political faction. From Boston, however, he reported to his parents that a shipwreck on Nantucket Shoals had cost him all his baggage except "two Shirts and one cravat." Appended to his appeal for clothing and funds was the request that his parents "presse Mr. Beekman either to send mony to go over to England, or some mony to remaine here." The Governor and Council at Boston he found quite sympathetic to the cause of the Leislerians at New York and somewhat contemptuous of "this old King James Councill . . . at York [which] spoiles all." In conclusion he asked that his letter be shown to Leisler's widow and to Beekman with his apology for not writing each of them because he had so little time.[45]

At home Gerardus had difficulties of his own entirely apart from the problem of raising money to send to Gouverneur. Having been released from confinement "on a bond of good behavior" (£500) Gerardus became concerned about the prospects of maintaining good behavior in the face of extreme provocation from his enemies. In a petition to Fletcher, March 27, 1693, for protection against John Teunisse in order that he might pursue his profession unmolested, Gerardus reported that

> . . . john Tunisse . . . makes great defamations against this petitioner Calling him Rough Rachall treator and Rebele etc. And threatning to persecute him . . . as Long he liveth and what he Could not doe to him would doe to his Children. . . .

Therefore Gerardus asked "protection against said John Teunisse according as your Excellency shall judge fitt and Convenient."[46]

When he wrote to his friend, Nicholas Collen, merchant at Dover, asking him to intercede with the government at London, Beekman complained that he and his fellow-Leislerians were "still treated here with all manner of opprobrium and scorn, and yet daily abused as rebels and traitors." Several times, he added, Governor Fletcher had reminded him that

[45] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 4.

[46] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 235–36.

he was still under sentence of death and could be executed whenever it pleased the Governor. Actually Fletcher had repeatedly offered to procure *pardons* for the convicts, but despite their earlier petition the convicts now declined a pardon as implying guilt which they refused to confess.[47]

Despite continued anti-Leisler sentiment Gerardus, within a year of his release from prison, found himself elected treasurer of Kings County, a post created by a law passed by the anti-Leislerian government of 1691. Recognizing the widespread popular support which Beekman's election demonstrated, the Governor and Council merely noted in the Council minutes that the Kings County treasury was now in the hands of Gerardus Beekman, "condemned for high treason."[48]

Following the Assembly elections of 1694, however, Gerardus appeared in a more important controversy. Before the Assembly session was three days old petitioners appeared from Kings County asserting that "Gerrard Beeckman was chosen Representative by the plurality of voices." They prayed that Beekman "be admitted to sit in Assembly" instead of Henry Filkin who had been "returned by the Sheriffe in his room."

The Governor and Council at once referred the petition to the Attorney General for his opinion in writing as to the propriety of Beekman's serving in the Assembly while "under attainder of High Treason." Recognizing the right of the legislature to determine the qualifications of its own members, and trusting its anti-Leislerian majority, the Governor and Council then referred the petition with the Attorney General's opinion to the Assembly. The Assembly received the petition March 5 and two days later its majority voted that "the said Petition should be rejected and thrown out of the House."[49]

Meanwhile Gouverneur and the young Leisler had joined forces in England. At the end of February 1695, the petition which they had drawn jointly came before the King in Council. That part of the petition which asked restoration of the residue of the convicts' estates still held by the government was referred

[47] NYHS *Collections, 1868*, 334–35.

[48] *Colonial Laws*, I, 237–8; *Calendar of State Papers, 1693–1696*, 476.

[49] *Council Journal*, I, 49–50; *Assembly Journal*, I, 36.

to the Lords of Trade and Plantations for study and report. Another part of the petition asking leave to apply to the Parliament for a reversal of the attainder imposed upon the convicts was granted forthwith.

The House of Lords took up a bill reversing the attainder of the Leislerians on April 2 and passed an amended version without serious opposition eight days later. In the House of Commons the bill was closely studied before a committee which took adverse as well as favorable testimony, but at last the bill passed unamended. It became law on May 3, 1695.[50]

With this important victory Leisler and Gouverneur now turned their sights directly on the anti-Leislerian government of Colonel Fletcher. After a year or more of collecting evidence by means of testimonials from home, the two young lobbyists went before the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, September 25, 1696, with a detailed defense of the Leislerians and a correspondingly strong indictment of Colonel Fletcher's government. The statement of grievances against Fletcher, powerful yet frequently almost unintelligible, bore the signatures of five men, including, of course, Gerardus Beekman and several of his former prison mates. It was also signed by an officer of the royal army who had accompanied Colonel Sloughter to New York.

Of the many charges leveled against Fletcher and his government, two concerned Gerardus directly. In addition to his bond of £500 for "good behavior," Gerardus had had to give additional security to guarantee that he would not leave the Province. It was known that he had sent money, according to a colleague, "to procure from the King a discharge from the dirty actions brought against [him] . . . upon pretence of law." Others too had been required to post bonds guaranteeing in effect that they would not go to England to add to the troubles caused Fletcher there by Leisler and Gouverneur.

The second charge which concerned Beekman asserted that he had been "banished in the Gouvernment by Governor Fletcher's order." Although Fletcher may have ousted Beekman

[50] NYHS *Collections 1868*, 337–65.

as Kings County treasurer, this probably had reference to what appeared on the record as the refusal by the Assembly to accept the Kings County petition to seat Beekman rather than Filkin as representative. That Fletcher's hand may have been strong in this action is apparent from a statement he had made some time before to the effect that he "could not suffer" that some of those whose treason had been pardoned should be elected to the Assembly.

The other accusations which Gerardus and his fellow-complainants hurled at Fletcher were no less serious. He had not only thrown out Leislerians duly elected to public office; he had also forcefully prevented many qualified Leislerians from voting, while "enfranchising" unqualified soldiers in large numbers. He ruled, too, with a Council dominated by those who had opposed the Glorious Revolution, and while actively soliciting bribes he viciously misappropriated funds levied by the Assembly and sadly neglected to repair or improve defensive installations. Within six months of the presentation of these charges the Crown, influenced also by a desire to consolidate the Northern colonies, replaced Fletcher with a new governor as strongly favorable to the Leislerians as Fletcher had been hostile.[51]

With the arrival of Governor Bellomont, the new appointee, Gerardus and his faction had an excellent opportunity to achieve power again. Their chances were improved initially by the error of their leading opponents who continued to work closely with the disgraced ex-Governor Fletcher. The Leislerians, thus encouraged, entered with spirit into the campaign preceding the election of a new Assembly which was required by Bellomont's appointment. When the results were in it was found that opponents and proponents of the new regime had been elected in almost equal numbers.[52]

Kings County named as its two representatives to the new Assembly the two ex-convicts, Gerardus Beekman and Myn-

[51] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 54, 212–20, 261; *Calendar of State Papers, 1696–1697*, 149–50.

[52] *Assembly Journal*, I, 85 *ff.*; *Calendar of State Papers, 1697–1698*, 236–37; *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 302 *ff.*; Osgood, *18th Century*, I, 266 *ff.*

dert Coerten. Twice in the earliest days of the session Gerardus was honored by appointment to a committee to bear a message to the Governor and Council. The first committee thanked the Governor for the message which he delivered on the opening day; the second asked for the designation of a committee of the Council to confer with an Assembly committee on the drafting of a message to the King. Before the Assembly was one week old, however, petitioners appeared protesting the conduct of the elections in several counties, including Kings.

The slight anti-Leislerian majority of the House had no difficulty in determining how these contests were to be resolved. Despite the pardons they had received Beekman and Coerten were ousted because of their conviction for treason. Another Leislerian from Richmond was similarly ousted, but in both counties new elections simply returned new Leislerians. The eight anti-Leislerians involved in disputed contests were quickly sustained by the Assembly, but Bellomont soon arranged for a new election in which his supporters triumphed. Beekman and Coerten, however, seem to have chosen not to run. The Assembly posts for Kings County continued to be filled by those who had replaced them in the previous Assembly.[53] For the remaining three years of Bellomont's administration, in fact, Gerardus remained very much in the background, although he did receive a promotion from major to lieutenant-colonel of militia.[54]

Three weeks after Bellomont died, Gerardus entered again upon the political scene. Four Leislerian members of the Council wrote then to the colony's London agent, a man of their own party, strongly urging him to exert his influence upon the Board of Trade and Plantations so that "if any person be added to the Councill, it may be of those persons recommended

[53] *Assembly Journal*, I, 86–92; *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 322; Osgood, *18th Century*, I, 277. Osgood is slightly inaccurate here on the details of who replaced whom. He seems also to have overlooked the significant fact that in no instance did an anti-Leislerian replace one of the ousted Leislerians. In other words the purge changed the personnel of the Assembly, but not its ideological balance.

[54] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 809; Beekman is listed here as Lieutenant-Colonel. Previously he had been referred to as "Major Beekman."

by the Earl of Bellomont. But if no names are sent hence by him, . . . you may name and indeavour to influence that Capt. William Laurence, Col. Gerardus Beekman, Capt. David Provoost, and Mr. Rip Van Dam, being honest men of good estates, may be put in, and that you use your industry to prevent others being put into the Councill who are not so well affected to the Government."[55]

The agent's success was only partial. Beekman, Lawrence and Van Dam received appointment to the Council, but so also did two of the twenty-five persons recommended by the anti-Leislerian leader, Nicholas Bayard,[56] whom the Leislerians, since the death of Bellomont, had been subjecting to some of the same indignities which Bayard and his followers had inflicted upon the Leislerian leaders some ten years before.

With the arrival of Lord Cornbury, the new governor, in May 1702, the comfortable majority enjoyed by the Leislerians on the Council quickly disappeared, for Cornbury clearly desired to emulate the career in peculation achieved by Fletcher rather than that in reform achieved by Bellomont. For this purpose he required the support of the wealthy and not-too-scrupulous merchants who had backed Fletcher rather than of the generally poorer and more honest men who had stood with Leisler and with Bellomont. Fortunately, for Fletcher's purposes, the Leislerian Councilors had weakened their position by the zealous manner in which they had prosecuted and convicted Bayard under the sweeping terms of the treason law which he himself had sponsored in 1691. Thus Cornbury easily found justification for suspending enough of them to leave his Council with an anti-Leislerian majority. At the end of the year the Board of Trade and Plantations dropped those whom Cornbury had suspended and added four new appointees, three of whom had been recommended by Bayard.[57]

Gerardus Beekman was not among the Councilors who were replaced, but under the circumstances one would hardly expect

[55] *Calendar of State Papers, 1701*, 121.

[56] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 849; *Calendar of State Papers, 1702*, 495.

[57] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 959–60; see also Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 61–62, and Charles W. Spencer, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

him to have become a leader of the new Council, and he did not. Throughout the Cornbury regime he remained quite without power or responsibility and in fact had to be officially "encouraged" by his Council colleagues on at least two occasions to attend meetings.[58]

Toward the end of the Cornbury regime in 1708, controversy arose over the authority of the local agent of the royal treasury to veto certain expenditures desired by the Governor and Council. Many expenditures during Cornbury's administration had been of dubious propriety, but Gerardus and the majority of the Council chose to support the Governor against the treasury.[59] If one assumes that Gerardus had not been drawn into the net of corruption which surrounded Cornbury, it is reasonable to suppose that he felt the Provincial representation on the Council made that body's decisions preferable in any case to those of a mere administrative officer of the royal government. To have supported the treasury agent would have created a highly dangerous precedent.

When Cornbury was at last replaced, Gerardus rose to power in a way which no one could have foreseen The new Governor, Lord Lovelace, died May 6, 1709, shortly after his arrival, and the Lieutenant-Governor, Richard Ingoldesby, was formally recalled on September 17, 1709. Executive power thus passed automatically to the Council's eldest member, Gerardus Beekman. Ironically Joseph Dudley, who as presiding judge at Beekman's trial for treason had imposed the grisly sentence, now wrote as Governor of Massachusetts to congratulate Beekman on his rise to power.[60]

Despite some recent lessening of factional differences Beekman's political record and his views were still anathema to the majority of the Council as well as to the majority of the Assembly. This fact plus the largely nominal nature of the powers of

[58] *Council Journal*, I, *passim*; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 184, 201. Lawrence was later removed from the Council because of his propensity to engage in brawls and riots (*Calendar of State Papers, 1706–1708*, 192).

[59] *Council Journal*, I, 251–61; Osgood, *18th Century*, II, 75–82.

[60] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 235; *Doc. Rel.*, V, 82, 91; BFP, Vol. I (letter from Joseph Dudley).

the Council's "President," customarily its eldest member, made it impossible for Beekman in his brief tenure as New York's chief executive to demonstrate strong leadership.[61] Nevertheless he tried.

The most bitter dispute to face Gerardus Beekman grew out of a religious controversy dating back to the early days of Cornbury's administration. At the death of the old domine whose services they had shared, the four Dutch towns of Long Island authorized their church elders to issue a "call" to a new minister, either from Holland or from some other portion of the Province. The call went first to Domine Freeman of Schenectady whose record was admired and whose travel expenses would be far less than those of a newcomer from Holland. Schenectady's well-founded displeasure at the prospect of losing its minister and of having to import another was ignored.[62]

Gerardus, a former Flatbush Elder and then a newly appointed member of the Council, promised to present to the Governor the petition of the Elders asking approval of their intention to summon Domine Freeman. Upon reflection, however, Gerardus refused to carry out his promise. Taking the burden upon themselves the petitioners won the Governor's promise of early action only to find upon their return to their homes that the people of all four towns were enraged because they had sought the Governor's approval to call a minister.

The residents of his own town of Flatbush secured Beekman's permission (why it was required is not clear) to hold a town meeting on the subject. At the meeting they asserted that it was "their priviledge to send for what Minister they please" without leave of the Governor. They also deposed their old Elders and elected new ones who were instructed to send forthwith for Freeman.

Next the original petitioners returned to New York for the Governor's answer to their request. Finding that Freeman had

[61] *Ibid.*, 235, 238.

[62] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 104 *ff.*; *Ecc. Rec.*, III, 1968 *ff.*, *passim*. This long story can best be followed chronologically in the latter reference.

"misbehaved himself by promoting . . . the unhappy divisions among the people of this province," Cornbury refused to authorize his transfer, but he did grant the Long Islanders permission to send for another minister from wherever they chose. There was apparently a "consideration" for this permission.

Accordingly a minister was summoned from Holland in the person of Domine Antonides. Upon arriving in New York, however, that eager Christian servant discovered that Cornbury, belatedly attempting to make everybody happy, had condoned the issuance of a call to Domine Freeman at Schenectady. Thus the Dutch towns of Kings County found themselves bound to support not one minister, but two.

Such a situation seemed to have great possibilities for compromise, but it also had a high potential for disagreements. For years it was the latter which prevailed. The controversy wore on through the end of Cornbury's regime and through that of Lord Lovelace. Then before Ingoldesby's recall a committee of the Council made a detailed study of the problem. Its members divided four to three with the majority recognizing Antonides as properly installed in all the towns but one, while the minority felt Freeman was properly accredited in all the towns.

Until this time, despite the fact that almost all the other important leaders of Kings County had lined up on one side or the other, Beekman had remained publicly uncommitted. Now he was forced to take a stand. This he did obliquely by asserting with the majority of the Council that there could not be two reports submitted by a committee to which one question had been referred. Thus the minority report was stricken from the record and the Council endorsed the Antonides faction.

Despite this vote of the Council, Lieutenant-Governor Ingoldesby on his own initiative promulgated a compromise solution to the effect that the two ministers should preach in succession in each town and share the revenue of the churches equally. Four of the Council insisted that the report favoring Antonides be accepted; one expressed approval of the new

compromise; Beekman, as an interested party, abstained. Antonides advanced legalistic reasons to excuse a flat refusal to obey Ingoldesby's compromise order and at that point Ingoldesby was taken off the hook by his recall. Beekman inherited the problem.

The controversy came up at the first meeting of the Council at which Gerardus presided. The four who favored Antonides insisted firmly on the implementation of the committee report which favored their man. Beekman still striving desperately to duck the issue, voted, as did the one member favorable to Freeman, to postpone action until the arrival of Governor Hunter. This decision of the Council majority was apparently made public, but it was soon followed by a petition from the Freeman forces asking that their man be permitted to continue preaching at Flatbush and Brooklyn until Hunter's arrival. Beekman and the Freeman supporter favored granting the petition, but the majority rejected it.

This would seem to have settled the matter, but Beekman, it was charged, issued an order requiring Antonides and Freeman to continue to preach in rotation at Flatbush and Brooklyn. Thereupon, say the Antonides men, "Mr. Freeman did preach the last Sunday in the Church of Flatbush finding means to open the said Church without the consent of the Consistory." Greatly incensed, the Antonides faction petitioned for the enforcement of the order of the Council and at the Council's next meeting, which the one Freeman supporter did not attend, all five members irately demanded that the President grant the petition of the Antonides forces. He refused. The Council members then informed him "they would not meet in Councill till it was done telling the President, if he could do what he had done as aforesaid without them, he might do all other acts of Government without them." Whereupon they left.

Fortunately, Governor Hunter arrived soon afterwards to lift the burden from Gerardus' shoulders, but tempers were still short and tension high. Henry Filkin, one of those who earlier had had Beekman ousted from the Assembly, reported that while returning on the ferry from New York one evening with

a group of Kings County justices he encountered Beekman. They all stopped at the ferry house for a glass of wine. Some time later an alcohol-accelerated quarrel broke out between Beekman and Filkin over Gerardus' assertion that in accordance with his own order as Council President Freeman would preach at Brooklyn that Sunday. Filkin insisted that Beekman's order was no longer in effect and that with the arrival of Hunter Beekman now had no more power in Kings County than Filkin did.

From here the controversy descended to name-calling in which, according to Filkin's report, Beekman enjoyed a decided edge although, in the threatening stage at which they parted, Filkin recovered the advantage by offering to knock Beekman from his horse. Force itself seems to have been employed, however, only against the door of the Brooklyn church which broke under the attack. So Freeman preached again in Brooklyn.

Although there is little evidence after this time to identify the chief lay participants, Gerardus probably continued for the remaining five years of the controversy to be a principal bulwark of the Freeman forces. As such he was defending both the right of a congregation to choose its own minister and the right to exercise that choice without government interference. The original call to Freeman in 1702 had been issued by the majority of the Flatbush congregation over the opposition of the elected consistory representing the principal churches of the County. Its approval by Cornbury had been achieved by political pressure whereas the approval given Antonides had been paid for. The support of Freeman had come largely from the people of the town of Flatbush, but eventually as he preached more and more in other towns he won additional support in those areas. The governing body of the church, the Classis of Amsterdam, had at first been impressed by Antonides' legalistic arguments against Freeman and had been further prejudiced against the latter by his tendency to act with greater independence of the Classis. However, respecting his popularity, the Classis had declined to intervene against him. It insisted that

the two must make some compromise agreement of their own. This was at last accomplished in 1715. After that the two worked together for many years apparently in closest harmony. Once committed to the struggle, Gerardus had stubbornly upheld the position taken by the people of his town against the influence of the Consistory, the Council, and to a lesser extent the Classis of Amsterdam. In the honorable compromise of 1715 his side had won a major victory.

Another religious problem also concerned Beekman during his brief tenure as Council President. This arose in Jamaica where there had for several years been conflict between the Dissenters and the Anglicans. The predominantly Dissenting population had previously built a church and parsonage for the town at public expense. Cornbury early in his administration had arbitrarily installed an Anglican minister in the parsonage and barred the Dissenting minister forever from preaching in his former church on the grounds that as public property the church and parsonage should be at the disposal only of the established faith. With the departure of Cornbury, the death of the Anglican minister, and the arrival of a vigorous young Dissenting minister from Scotland, the townspeople, on the day after Gerardus Beekman's formal "accession" to power, took over the church and the parsonage which the widow of the Anglican minister had continued until then to occupy.[63]

Before that day had ended, a vigorous protest was in Beekman's hand. Samuel Clowes, an Anglican, informed Beekman that the Dissenters "have this day committed a Riot or forceable Detainer in the Church." He persuaded himself, not too realistically in view of Beekman's faith, that "your Honor will suppress . . . such forceable Ways . . . ," and direct the Attorney General to prosecute the offenders.[64]

Beekman took up the matter with the Council on April 13. The first order of the Council directed the Queens County justices to investigate and report to the Council "by Thursday

[63] George W. Winans, *First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica* (New York: published by the Church, 1943), Chapters, II, VII.

[64] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 133; *Ecc. Rec.*, III 1845.

next." The justices unanimously confirmed the account of the incident already given by one of their number who had also committed several of the Dissenters to the custody of the sheriff. The Council in effect condoned the action of the Dissenters for, although its members thought they ought neither to encourage nor discourage the prosecution, they later remitted the fines imposed upon the Dissenters. Both church and parsonage remained in the possession of the Dissenters even after the arrival of Governor Hunter and, somewhat later, of a new Anglican minister.[65]

Gerardus of course had other concerns as Council President. One of these was the conduct of intercolonial correspondence which was diplomatic in nature. Of Beekman's duties in this regard there remain some hints in two letters written to him in May of 1710 by Governor Dudley of Massachusetts. The first, after congratulating Beekman upon his accession to power, informed him that Colonel Redknap, in charge of the British army engineers, had gone to New Hampshire and Maine at Dudley's order "to Reform the forts and Garisons there" in the face of threatened Indian attack. Dudley promised, apparently in response to Beekman's request, that Redknap would hurry with that work in order that he might "attend her Majestyes service in your Government . . . as soon as possible.[66]

The second of Dudley's letters wished Beekman "very happy in the Administration of the Government of New York until the arrival of Colonel Hunter," and after repeating the foregoing information about Colonel Redknap promised to advertise in the "Next News Letters of the province" for some New York deserters about whom Gerardus had inquired. Finding New England waters "infested by privateers," Dudley also requested Beekman to "send one of the frigotts in your attendance to Cruse of[f] Long Island Head a [to] Marthas Vineyard for the security of your own Coasters as well as ours."[67]

[65] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 134–36, 142; *Ecc. Rec.*, III, 1846, 1850–51; Winans, *op. cit.*, 40–41.

[66] BFP, Vol. I.

[67] *Idem.*

The greatest administrative problem which fell to Beekman as Council President was to prepare for the reception of the Palatine German refugees. Thousands of these people of the upper Rhine area had fled to England following the devastation of their homeland in the course of the War of the Spanish Succession. With the combined motives of reducing the drain on the royal treasury for support of the refugees, of strengthening the under-populated New York frontier, and of producing the naval stores which mercantilist thinking demanded be provided from within the empire, the royal government had determined to send 3000 Palatines to New York.[68]

Thus at the beginning of 1710 Gerardus received a letter written early the previous November by Secretary of State Sunderland containing the information that "The Queen having thought fit to order the sending of three thousand of the poor Palatines to New York, has commanded me to acquaint you with it and to tell you that they are to sail from hence about the 15th of next Month." Accordingly, with what appeared likely to be little more than a month's notice, Gerardus and the Council were to prepare "Lodging and Provisions" for refugees equal in numbers to half the population of New York City. They could draw some solace, however, from Sunderland's assurance that the royal government would bear the cost for Her Majesty desired "that these People should in no wise become a burthen to your Colony."[69]

Gerardus began almost as soon as he assumed authority to consider the problem posed by the imminent arrival of the Palatines. Orders were issued to prepare an inventory of the public stores at Albany and New York. Alerted by the scarcity of foods which this survey revealed, Gerardus and the Council clamped down on the issuance of clearance papers for export vessels. John Lymen's ship *Gloster* with a cargo of pork and peas was denied clearance "because of the expected arrival of

[68] See *Calendar of State Papers, 1708–1709*, 515; *Ecc. Rec.*, III, 1808.

[69] For estimates of New York City's population see Stokes, IV, 440, 499; Sunderland's letter (BFP. Vol. I) also appears in Alexander J. Wall, Jr., "Her Majesty Does Particularly Recommend," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, XXXI (October, 1947), 193–98.

3000 palatines." The government began to buy up what food supplies it could by advertising its intentions widely and soliciting the cooperation of New Jersey officers.

By the end of May pressures were mounting for the relaxation of the embargo on the export of provisions. Many merchants were quite incensed at this suspension of their accustomed trading privileges. Consequently as food supplies mounted Gerardus and the Council cautiously gave clearance to Benjamin Faneuil and Andrew Gibbs for their ship *Friendly Galley* and to Luis Gomes and Company of Madeira; both ships were bearing wheat for export.[70]

On June 13, Council President Beekman informed his colleagues that the ship *Lyon* had arrived in port with a considerable number of Palatines for whom lodging and provisions were required according to the orders of the Queen. The President desired their opinions as to what measures should be taken. The Mayor of New York City presented a petition asking that the Palatines be forbidden to come into the City because the "contagious distempers" (actually typhus) among them would not only endanger the health of the City's population, but would also tend to keep the country people from coming into the City with food supplies.

The Council thereupon decided to land the Palatines on Nutten's (now Governor's) Island. Three doctors were requested to go on board the ship in the afternoon to determine the actual state of health of the refugees, and two carpenters were ordered to meet with President Beekman on the island at two o'clock to consult on the building of huts to house the refugees. Orders were also issued for the purchase of "so many Boards and other materials . . . as the said Carpenters shall judge necessary for that service." Orders were issued requiring the ship to discharge its passengers on Nutten's Island and its stores at the fort on the tip of Manhattan.[71]

Next day more Palatines arrived, but so also did the new Governor, Robert Hunter. Beekman had executed well his responsibilities, but now the burden fell on other shoulders. No

[70] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 235–38. [71] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 333–34.

doubt Gerardus continued to render important advice on the arrangements to be made, but the final authority now rested elsewhere and Gerardus, as far as the records show, retired to virtual anonymity among his fellow Council members. The Palatines had suffered horribly from typhus during the voyage and their future in New York was to be a trying one, but all indications are that Gerardus Beekman had done extremely well in securing provisions and temporary lodgings for them.

For some time after Hunter's arrival, controversy between the Assembly on the one hand and the Governor and Council on the other was very sharp. Gerardus apparently took little part in this struggle. Although in the years between 1710 and 1717 the Council regularly formed *ad hoc* committees to deal with legislative measures, Gerardus headed only a few such committees and those he headed dealt with unimportant or non-controversial items. This suggests that in the struggle for political power he may have been more sympathetic to the Assembly than to the Governor and Council.

When harmony had been restored by the election of an Assembly largely subservient to the Governor, Gerardus began to appear more frequently as committee chairman. From 1717 to 1721 he seems to have been one of the principal liaison men between the Council and the Assembly, although it cannot be ascertained that he took a leading role in framing policies, most of which seem to have come from the Governor. After 1721 Gerardus' activities tapered off until his death in 1723.[72]

Beekman's private interests from 1702 until his death seem to have centered chiefly on real estate. The Council minutes for this period abound with references to petitions for land grants to individuals or groups and no one was much more active in this field of endeavor than Gerardus. He had a lot of catching up to do because of his long sojourn in the realm of political disfavor.[73]

In 1702 Gerardus and a partner bought for £336 a tract of 1800 acres along the Raritan River in the present town of

[72] *Council Journal*, I, *passim; Assembly Journal*, I, *passim.*

[73] *Calendar of Council Minutes, passim.*

South Boundbrook, New Jersey. Beekman conveyed one third of his share to his daughter, Cornelia Van Dam, in 1722, and probably made similar conveyances of the other two thirds to others of his many children. He also shared in the purchase for £200 of 450 acres on the south side of the Raritan near the site of New Brunswick, but this property apparently was soon sold to one of his partners.[74]

After a year or more of petitioning, Beekman and a partner received in 1710 a patent for 3,000 acres in Ulster County. Then in 1720 in conjunction with two other Council members and the widow of a third, Beekman received a second patent for an additional 1,016 acres adjacent to the old grant.[75]

In addition to these New Jersey and up-river ventures Gerardus also had interests in Manhattan. Along with his brothers and sisters he had inherited from his father a sizeable tract along the East River, including a brewhouse and a slaughterhouse. In 1703 Gerardus asked the New York City government for title to a piece of ground between high and low water marks fronting the land on Queen Street (now Pearl Street) which he had inherited. This City-owned land he sought in order to build a "slip."

The city at first denied his petition, but later granted it on the condition that he make and maintain forever a street (now part of Water Street) thirty feet wide along the shore line of his grant, a slip of twenty-seven feet (now filled by Fulton Street), and a wharf twelve feet in width. The slip was to be a public slip "for the use of the [City] Corporation for-Ever." Nothing happened after this for many years, but in 1722 the agreement was restated and the project apparently brought to completion.[76] It was long a source of revenue to members of the Beekman family.

All told, these properties of Gerardus, supplemented by other minor holdings in Flatbush and Manhattan, could

[74] Rosalie Fellows Bailey, *Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York* (New York: William Morrow, 1936), 428, 452, 466.

[75] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 231, 233, 235, 275, 277.

[76] BFP, Box 31; *Minutes of Common Council*, II, 220, 232, 235, 237; III, 198, 200–01, 295–86.

scarcely compare with the vast estates in Dutchess County which were owned by his brother Henry. Henry had been more circumspect in politics.

In his will, dated November 10, 1722, and proved one year and five days later, Gerardus dealt equally with his eight surviving children, five sons and three daughters.[77] He empowered his wife as executrix to see that those of his children who had not yet been given "suitable education, maintenance and outset" actually received such benefits on the same footing as their elder siblings. All eight children were to share equally in the estate, except daughters who married. Actually, all of his daughters did marry, but Gerardus seems to have made compensatory provision for them.[78]

The children of Gerardus Beekman married into "good" families. Of the four sons who married, Christopher and William both selected Delanoys. Adrian won a Lispenard; Gerardus married a Van Horne and after her death a Provoost, while Jacobus, the youngest, married a DePeyster. Of the three daughters, Catharine married Charles LeRoux; Cornelia married the son of her father's Council colleague, Rip Van Dam, and Maria wedded Jacob Walton of mercantile fame.[79] These were all prominent and respected families, but they were perhaps a step beneath those of Livingston and Van Cortlandt.

Clearly Gerardus Beekman was less devoted to material goals and more concerned with social values than was Henry Beekman. Most of Henry's actions even in the continuing contest to expand the Assembly's powers bore an obvious relation to his role as a leading landholder. By entering the field of medicine Gerardus had chosen a career which then promised more in opportunities for service than it did in income. His involvement in the Leisler affair was dictated largely, it would appear, by the desire to protect his own religion against

[77] Another son, Adrian, had been killed in the slave revolt of 1712. Teunis G. Bergen, *Early Settlers of Kings County* (New York, 1881), 25–26; Stokes, IV, 475. The accuracy of the Bergen book is questionable in some details, but Van Cleef's baptismal records, I, 34, confirm the facts which are important here.

[78] NYHS *Collections 1893* (Abstracts of Wills), 275–76; BFP, *passim*.

[79] Aitken, *passim*: BFP.

a grossly exaggerated Catholic threat and by his desire for more representative government. Later he fought to protect his religion from state interference and to establish the right of the Flatbush congregation to select its own minister. During the period in which he exercised executive power in New York he prepared carefully for the reception of the Palatine refugees and then as throughout a lifetime of government service in an era of widespread corruption he appears to have been singularly free of taint. He contributed his bit to the evolution of religious liberty and democratic government.

5

HENRY BEEKMAN II (1688-1776)

Landholder and Legislator from Dutchess County

THE CONTRIBUTIONS of William Beekman and his two sons, Henry and Gerardus, to the development of the institutional framework of colonial New York were matched in the third generation by Henry Beekman, Junior. An Assembly member for fully one third of the eighteenth century, the younger Henry aided significantly the growth of that body's powers at the expense of the royal governors. At the same time he ruled the rapidly growing population of Dutchess County almost as if he had been its manor lord.[1]

Most of the available information on Henry, Jr., concerns the period of his political activity, but a few observations can be made about his earlier life. Henry was born in 1688, the eve of the Leislerian upheaval, eleven years before his father acquired his two enormous land grants in Dutchess County. He was just entering manhood when the colonial Assembly in which his father was a respected leader passed a milestone in the evolution of New York's democracy by prying from the royal government control of the provincial revenues. It seems likely in view of these facts that Henry's education emphasized practical aspects of provincial politics and the eighteenth-century equivalent of real estate management. The orthography and sentence structure in his English letters, especially those

[1] A manor lord not only collected rents from tenants on his manor but originally appointed all its governmental officers as well. We shall see how local officials were appointed in Dutchess County.

written in a hurry, reflect enough Dutch influence to suggest that Dutch was his first language and that his early use of English was not extensive.[2] He later demonstrated considerable understanding of British constitutional traditions, but he may have picked that up after he entered the Assembly. What formal training he received as a youth remains unknown.

That Henry belonged to the ruling aristocracy is well illustrated by identifying some of his closer relatives. The second husband[3] of his elder sister, Catharine, was John Rutsen whose family, as we have seen, was certainly very close to the top of both the economic and political ladders in Ulster County. Catharine's third husband was Albert Pawling, large landholder and sometime Assemblyman from Ulster County. Henry's younger sister, Cornelia, married Gilbert Livingston, son of the Scottish immigrant, Robert Livingston, whose none-too-scrupulous acuity had made him one of the wealthiest men in the province and lord of the semi-feudal Manor of Livingston, which was entitled to its own seat in the Assembly. Gilbert was a large landowner in Ulster County and for a time occupied the Assembly seat for Livingston Manor. His brother Philip, second lord of the manor, was one of the most influential members of the provincial Council.[4]

Henry himself married fully as well as did his two sisters. His first wife was Janet Livingston, daughter of the nephew of the first lord of Livingston Manor. After she died in 1724 Henry married Gertrude Van Cortlandt. Gertrude was the daughter of Stephanus Van Cortlandt, the son of Oloff Stevense Van Cortlandt who was William Beekman's political rival in the days of Peter Stuyvesant. Stephanus Van Cortlandt was a member of the Council, a justice, and finally Chief Justice, of the Supreme Court of the Province from the time of its founding in 1691 until his death in 1700. He was also a militia

[2] See especially the letter to Henry Livingston, September 4, 1750 (NYHS, Henry Beekman Manuscripts). Here "mine" is "myn" and Henry expresses his "hoop . . . to be soen back."

[3] See page 120 for a more detailed account of Catharine's marital career.

[4] On the Livingston family relationships, see Florence Van Rensselaer, *The Livingston Family in America and Its Scottish Origins* (New York: 1949). This is a clear and comprehensive genealogy.

commander, a leading merchant, and a landholder whose many possessions included the 83,000 acres in Cortlandt Manor, a ten-mile strip between Connecticut and the Hudson River in northern Westchester County. Gertrude's brother, Philip, was a member of the Council from 1730 to his death in 1746.[5] Her sister Anne was the mother of James De Lancey, Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.[6] Thus Henry Beekman was related in one way or another to a surprising number of the prominent political leaders among whom he took his place.[7]

Unlike that of his father, the political career of the younger Henry Beekman centered on Dutchess rather than Ulster County. The principal explanation for this is that the family landholdings in Ulster were not particularly extensive; there were other leaders who held more land and thus had more dependents and greater prestige in Ulster County. In Dutchess County, however, Henry was not only the largest individual landholder, but he and his father were principal promoters of the County's settlement.

As late as 1701 Governor Bellomont had not heard that there were any tenants on the two vast tracts of land which had been granted to Henry Beekman, Senior, in 1697–1698.[8] The Governor's information was apparently not accurate, however, for there had been some settlers in the area of the Rhinebeck patent even before 1697 and the small stone house in which Henry later lived at Rhinebeck appears to have been built in 1700.[9]

[5] Philip's son, Pierre, Lieutenant-Governor of New York State in the Revolutionary period, married a daughter of Henry's sister Cornelia, wife of Gilbert Livingston. Pierre VanCortlandt's daughter, as we shall see in the following chapter, married the only son of the New York merchant, Gerard G. Beekman. Such were the interrelationships within the New York aristocracy.

[6] L. Effingham De Forest, *The Van Cortlandt Family* (New York: The Historical Publication Society, 1930).

[7] In 1751 when two of Governor Clinton's advisers were considering the appointment of Robert R. Livingston to an important judicial office one of them confessed to the other that he was "staggered" by Livingston's close relationship to three of the Governor's leading opponents, including Henry Beekman whose only daughter Livingston had married (NYHS *Collections*, *1920*, 303–04).

[8] *Doc. Rel.*, IV, 823.

[9] Philip H. Smith, *General History of Duchess County* (Pawling: 1877), 388–89. This work is cited hereafter as P. Smith. See also Frank Hasbrouck (ed.), *The History of Dutchess County, New York* (Poughkeepsie: S. A. Matthieu, 1909), 439. This work is cited hereafter as Hasbrouck.

In fact by 1714 the County had a population, mostly in the Rhinebeck area, of 445, including 29 slaves.[10] Many of these early settlers were German refugees from the Palatinate who had first begun to arrive in New York, as we have seen, in 1710. In 1714, sometime after the Beekmans had built both a saw mill and a grist mill in the Rhinebeck area, thirty-five Palatine families who reportedly had undergone unpleasant experiences on the lands of Robert Livingston farther north settled anew in Rhinebeck. They probably did so at Beekman's invitation. Two years later they built a church which was shared by both Lutheran and Calvinist residents and by 1718 the northern most of the county's three wards could boast of sixty-four taxpayers and a total assessed valuation of £426 on its real estate. Settlement elsewhere proceeded more slowly so that the tiny village with the German name remained for some time the metropolis of Dutchess County.[11]

Despite its small population, Dutchess County had gained a seat in the provincial Assembly by 1713 and in 1715, partly because Governor Hunter and his adviser Lewis Morris thought that a second representative from Dutchess would strengthen their control of the Assembly,[12] its representation was increased to two, the usual county representation. The elder Henry Beekman, who remained an important figure in the Assembly until his death in 1716, could probably have put his son, then well into his twenties, into one of these seats if he had chosen to do so, but apparently he did not. Instead the younger Henry managed the property in the Rhinebeck and Beekman patents conveyed to him before his father's death and probably took over management of all his father's estate after 1716, although

[10] James H. Smith, *History of Duchess County, New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1882), 59. This work is cited hereafter as J. Smith.

[11] "A Packet of Old Letters," *Yearbook of the Dutchess County Historical Society, 1921*, 36; Hasbrouck, 439, 441, 444. The "Packet of Old Letters" contains a number written by Henry Beekman to his brother-in-law, Gilbert Livingston, and to his nephew, Henry Livingston; this reference is cited hereafter as *Yearbook* with the addressee and the date of the letter.

[12] Beverly McAnear, "Politics in Provincial New York, 1689–1761," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1935), 276. See also the *Assembly Journal, passim.* The McAnear dissertation is cited hereafter as McAnear.

his two sisters were to share in its distribution.[13] He was also a tax assessor in Rhinebeck in 1717,[14] a land speculator on his own in the early 1720's,[15] and a militia leader.[16] When one of the Dutchess Assemblymen died in 1724 Henry, then thirty-six and a colonel in the militia, was elected to replace him.

Inexperienced as he was, Henry immediately assumed an important role in the Assembly, and on one key question took the side of the unpopular Governor Burnet. At issue was the Governor's effort to end the trade between New York merchants at Albany and the French in Canada. Frontier fur traders among the Canadians found that British goods were both better in quality and lower in price than those of French manufacture and that Albany merchants were not at all averse to selling British goods to the Canadians instead of supplying only the English traders. The long-run tendency of such French-English trade was to foster the already-marked dependence of the Indians upon the French, who were favored in the Indian trade by the geography of the St. Lawrence watershed, and to retard the advance of the New York frontier by cementing a French-Indian alliance in its path.

Henry apparently had no part in the trade with the French and as a militia colonel who lived relatively close to the constantly embroiled frontier he had every wish to see it move on. He was a member of the committee formed on September 24, 1725, to prepare a bill to prohibit this trade with the French and to encourage trade by New Yorkers with "far Nations of Indians."[17] The mercantile interests fought unsuccessfully against the bill in New York, but their suppliers in England were able to bring about enough pressure on the home government so that it was disallowed there.[18] The controversy did result, however, in the establishment of the government-sup-

[13] P. Smith, 417; J. Smith, 256.

[14] J. Smith, 119.

[15] *Calendar of Land Papers*, 123, 129, 130, 139, 144, 151, 157; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 467, 493, 494; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 284; NYHS *Collections, 1934*, 157–59. In the last reference Cadwallader Colden, Surveyor General, expressed concern at being unable to find 2000 acres of good land in Orange County for Henry Beekman and partner; this was in 1720.

[16] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 427, 454, 487.

[17] *Assembly Journal*, I, 521.

[18] *Colonial Laws*, II, 372.

ported trading post and fort at Oswego on Lake Ontario, designed to foster New York trade with the "far Nations of Indians" in competition with the French. Henry Beekman was always a leading legislative supporter of this project and its broader aim of winning for New Yorkers Indian allies, Indian trade, and Indian land.

On other issues the Assembly was virtually unanimous against Burnet. At the time of his arrival in 1720 the Governor had caused some concern by failing to observe the custom on such occasions of calling for the election of a new Assembly. Thus the comparatively pliant Assembly elected in 1716 continued in office and, obedient to the will of Lewis Morris who had regularly twisted it to Governor Hunter's purposes, passed a five-year revenue allocation for the support of the royal government at New York. When this expired in 1725 the Assembly had accumulated grievances on such points as the Governor's use of his patronage powers, his attempt to make the provincial treasurer account to the crown's auditor-general instead of only to the Assembly, and his predilection for acting as a court of equity. Consequently the Assembly would renew the revenue grant for only three years and in so doing it reduced the salary authorized to be paid to Lewis Morris as Chief Justice. Later when the members learned that the Governor was actually paying Morris more than his reduced salary and in other ways was not abiding by their resolutions with respect to the expenditure of the revenue, they passed a clearly worded address requesting that he so so.[19] Were he not to conform, it would mean that the Assembly had lost much of the hard-won fruit of its long contest with Governor Hunter for the power to fix the compensation of government officials.

That Henry Beekman took the side of the extreme opponents of the Governor on all these issues is strongly suggested[20] by his conduct during the controversy over the court of chancery. This issue had arisen previously in the administration of Gov-

[19] *Assembly Journal*, I, 534, 550.

[20] The failure of the *Assembly Journal* to record votes at this time makes it impossible to state with confidence that Henry actually opposed the Governor on all these issues.

ernor Hunter (1710–1720) when, in response to petitions seeking the remedies of equity to situations in which the ends of justice were not adequately served by the Common Law, the Governor reluctantly consented to act as chancellor. He had done so in fact only after being advised by the Attorney General in London that he was authorized to exercise such jurisdiction and that it could not be delegated or shared.[21] The Assembly, on the other hand, tartly resolved that the establishment of a court of chancery without its authorization was "contrary to Law, without Precedent and of dangerous Consequences to the Liberty and Property of the Subject."[22] The members may have had in mind an ancient act of the provincial legislature which authorized Governor *and* Council to exercise equity jurisdiction, for if this act were still in effect, as Lewis Morris later asserted, then the Governor was guilty of placing himself above the law.[23] A more practical basis for opposition to the Governor's creation of an equity court was suggested by Hunter himself when he observed:

> Upon my arrival here the receiver General complained that there was a total Cessation of payment of Quit Rents, and begged for a remedy as he hoped for none in the common course of Law, the Delinquents not only trusting to but bragging of the impossibility of finding Jurries in the Country that would give a verdict for the Crown . . . upon which the Delinquents were subpoenaed to the Court of Chancery which immediately had its effect, for the arrears of Quit Rents were immediately brought in and have ever since been regularly paid in to the Kings Receiver.[24]

Thus an Assembly dominated by large landholders had good reason to resent the creation of this court. Furthermore the Assembly was then endeavoring to bring all executive officials in the Province under its control by cutting off the salaries of those who did not conform to its will. Quitrent revenues enabled the Governor to subsidize those officials who were being chastised for giving first loyalty to the crown rather than to the Assembly.[25]

[21] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 208, 252, 298, 946–47.

[22] *Assembly Journal*, I, 308.

[23] "Petition to the King, for Redress of Grievances in New York," *Historical Magazine*, 2nd series, I, 75.

[24] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 499; see also page 357.

[25] Chancery powers may also have been used then as later to punish political opponents (see the speech of Vincent Matthews, NYHS *Collections, 1934*, 235).

Thanks to Hunter's constitutional concessions, his conciliatory manner, and his lack of zeal for deciding cases in equity, the controversy over the court of chancery died down in the latter part of his administration, but it was revived under Governor Burnet. As William Smith noted in his *History of New York*:

> No governor before him, did so much business in chancery. The office of chancellor was his delight. He made a tolerable figure in the exercize of it, though he was no lawyer, and had a foible very unsuitable for a judge, I mean his resolving too speedily, for he used to say of himself, "I act first and think afterwards."[26]

By 1727 the provincials had had enough. Prompted in all probability by the exercise of chancery powers, Henry Beekman had paid to the crown's Receiver General early in November 52 bushels of wheat, the last payment on a total of 370 bushels for *arrears* of quitrent to 1727 on Dutchess County lands in the Poughkeepsie area.[27] Adolph Philipse, Speaker of the House, had also become the victim of an adverse decision by the Governor in chancery which "very much affected his estate."[28] Suddenly on November 25 the Assembly Committee on Grievances, of which Beekman was a member, reported that "the Court of Chancery, as lately assumed to be set up here, renders the Liberties and Properties of the said Subjects extremely precarious; and that by the violent Measures taken in, and allowed by it, some have been ruined, others obliged to abandon the Colony, and many restrained in it, either by Imprisonment or by excessive Bail. . . ." The committee members felt that "the extraordinary Proceedings of that Court, and the exorbitant Fees and Charges countenanced to be exacted by the Officers and Practitioners thereof, are the greatest Grievance and Oppression this Colony hath ever felt." Resolutions proposed by the committee and adopted by the House asserted that the operation of a court of chancery "without Consent in

[26] William Smith, *The History of the Province of New York* (2 vols.; New York: New-York Historical Society, 1830), I, 248. This work is cited hereafter as W. Smith.

[27] J. Smith, 51.

[28] W. Smith, I, 278.

General Assembly, is unwarrantable and contrary to the Laws of *England*, and a manifest Oppression and Grievance to the Subjects, and of a pernicious Consequence to their Liberties and Properties." They also proclaimed the intent of the members to bring in a bill at the next session to invalidate all past actions of the court "so assumed to be erected" and to "take into Consideration whether it be necessary to establish a Court of Equity or Chancery in this Colony."[29]

Upon learning of these resolutions Governor Burnet promptly dissolved the Assembly and instigated an investigation by the Council into the circumstances surrounding their passage. On November 27 the Council took testimony from Assemblymen Robert Livingston, Jr., and Garret Van Horne. Next day Henry Beekman was summoned. He promptly challenged the right of the Council to investigate proceedings of the Assembly and upon refusing to answer questions was placed under arrest.[30] The clerk of the Assembly then provided additional testimony. On the basis of this testimony and other information Cadwallader Colden, member of the Council and perennial defender of the crown's prerogatives, reported to the authorities in England that after having at its previous session "endeavoured to make the Officers of the Government wholly dependent upon them" the Assembly members at their last session had materially weakened the courts. "In short," he concluded, "if they shall be allowed to go on without some speedy remedy to put a stop to them, it is to be feared that a Resolve of the House of the Representatives will in time be look't on as of more force than his Majesty's positive Command, or even perhaps than an Act of Parliament if it be not accompanied with sufficient force to put it in Execution."[31]

New elections took place in 1728 on the arrival of John Montgomery to replace Burnet who had been transferred to Massachusetts.[32] Henry's brother-in-law, Gilbert Livingston, replaced Robert Livingston, Jr., for Livingston Manor, but

[29] *Assembly Journal*, I, 571–72.

[30] *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, 500; *Assembly Journal*, I, 576–77.

[31] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 844.

[32] The transfer was "necessary for the public tranquility" according to William Smith (I, 280), a warm admirer of Burnet.

there were few other changes in the composition of the House. The Assembly convened on July 23, but Henry, who was returned by Dutchess County, and another brother-in-law, Albert Pawling, a representative from Ulster County, did not arrive until July 29. Next day the House took up the chancery question in all its ramifications. Noting that "several of the . . . Members were called by an high Hand, to give an Account of the Proceedings of that House, and one of them [Beekman] kept under Confinement, for insisting that he conceived himself accountable to the House only for any Act done in it," the House recorded its "unanimous Opinion" to the effect that "such Attempts are the highest Violation of the Privileges of General Assemblies, and that the Liberties and Properties of the People would be rendered extream precarious, if even those who represent them should be called to an Account, for what they do when they are convened in General Assembly." It was therefore resolved that "for any Act, Matter or Thing, done in the General Assembly, the Members thereof are accountable and answerable to the House only, and to no other Person or Persons whatever." It was also asserted that presuming to call a member to account for his conduct in the House was, unless done by the House itself, "of pernicious and dangerous Consequence to the Liberties of the People." A third resolution expressed the determination of the House to prevent in the future such infringements of the rights of its members. Then the House proceeded to attempt a reciprocal infringement by ordering the clerk of the Council to provide the House a record of the Council proceedings in the matter so that its Committee on Grievances could study the question and report to the House who was responsible and what was his "Pretence or Motive."[33]

The controversy ceased after the issuance of this bold challenge, but the House was left in possession of the field. Governor Montgomery, despite considerable pressure from home, steadily refused throughout his administration to revive the

[33] *Assembly Journal*, I, 576–77.

court of chancery.[34] He seems to have yielded full control over expenditures to the Assembly and he made amends to Henry Beekman for the indignity he had suffered by appointing him to the lucrative office of Sheriff for the City and County of New York.[35]

As Sheriff, an office which he held for five years, Henry's duties and his sources of income were quite like those of modern incumbents of that office in many communities. He received an allowance for the subsistence of prisoners; he collected fees for serving legal papers of various kinds. He was also charged with the less remunerative task of enforcing law and order.

A special duty which fell to Henry Beekman in 1731 was that of census-taker for the City. He found that of the Colony's 50,000 inhabitants the City and County of New York contained more than 8,000, including about 1,500 Negroes. Albany, Westchester, Suffolk and Queens Counties were not too far behind; Dutchess County with about 2,000 people was exceeded by all the others except Orange and Richmond (Staten Island).[36]

Provincial patronage held still more rewards for Assemblyman Beekman in addition to his New York City job. The powers of the Governor included authorization to name a large number of county officials in addition to the sheriffs. Among these were the militia officers, the judges, and the coroners. Just as powerful members of Congress have considerable "influence" today (if they are of the same party as the President) on the appointment of federal officers within their constituencies, so Assemblymen in colonial New York had "influence" on the appointments made by the royal Governors within their areas. At the end of Burnet's administration (1727) Colden reported to the authorities in Britain that members of the Assembly, whether or not they supported the Governor, had "in effect

[34] Charles Worthen Spencer, "The Rise of the Assembly, 1691–1760," *History of the State of New York*, ed. by Alexander C. Flick (10 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1933–37), II, 179–80. This reference is cited hereafter as Spencer.

[35] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 306.

[36] *Doc. Rel.*, V, 929. J. Smith (60) gives a different figure for Dutchess County in 1731, but the difference is slight.

the Nomination of all the Officers who are not immediately apointed by the King."[37] Under the more compliant Montgomery, according to Lewis Morris, Jr., the Assemblymen found it possible "to make and unmake Officers in their several Counties as they think fit, who generally change with the change of an Assembly Man."[38] In addition to this influence which he exercised as the more powerful of the two Assemblymen from Dutchess County, it has been asserted that Henry Beekman "inherited" from his father the role of political boss in Ulster County.[39] If this was in fact the case, then Henry probably designated the two Assemblymen from that county in addition to exerting influence on gubernatorial appointments there. Thus, it is possible that while Henry's brother-in-law, Gilbert Livingston, to whom he was very close, sat in the Assembly for Livingston Manor, Henry may have influenced strongly if not controlled as many as five votes[40] in the Assembly's total of twenty-six. This would help to account for Henry's evident influence in the Assembly and his appointment as Sheriff of New York.

The problems of Dutchess County and of Ulster County and Livingston Manor continued to concern Henry despite his increasing preoccupation with affairs of the Province and its capital city. In 1730 he gave 44 acres of land to the Reformed Dutch congregation of Rhinebeck and so made possible the construction of a church which was completed in 1733.[41] In 1725 he had served on a committee to prepare legislation for the protection of the breed of horses and cattle in Ulster and Orange Counties.[42] In 1727 he helped to revise legislation to prevent swine from running at large in Dutchess County, Livingston Manor, and a part of Albany County.[43] Next year he was instrumental in securing passage of a rigorous and com-

[37] *Ibid.*, 844.

[38] *Ibid.*, 887.

[39] McAnear, 432.

[40] These would be two (including his own) in Dutchess, two in Ulster (including his other brother-in-law, Albert Pawling), and the one for Livingston Manor.

[41] P. Smith, 398; Hasbrouck, 445.

[42] *Assembly Journal*, I, 527; *Colonial Laws*, II, 297–98.

[43] *Assembly Journal*, I, 568; *Colonial Laws*, II, 424–25.

prehensive measure "for the better clearing regulating and further laying out publick high Roads in Dutchess County." Henry himself served as one of three commissioners charged with responsibility for carrying out the provisions of the act in the northern part of the County and was the only one of the twelve commissioners so named for various parts of the County to be dignified by the designation, "Esquire."[44]

Henry's personal life during the first few years of his service in the Assembly was not without sorrow. His first wife, Janet Livingston, died in 1724, shortly after the birth of their second child. This child, Margaret Beekman, was brought up by a maternal aunt who lived in Brooklyn,[45] but her brother, Henry Beekman, III, died before reaching manhood. Henry had no children by his second wife, Gertrude Van Cortlandt, whom he married in 1726.

The type of economic problem which consumed much of Henry's time is suggested by an experience of his brother-in-law, Gilbert Livingston. Gilbert had contracted with the provincial government to collect and turn over £1500 annually in liquor excise taxes. Unfortunately at that time war with Spain eliminated a portion of the export market for New York flour and bread. This reduced the income of the Province and curtailed expenditures in the "publique houses" for strong liquors. Consequently excise collections fell off badly and Gilbert was unable to meet his obligation. Henry Beekman had cause to worry not only because Gilbert was his brother-in-law, but also because he was one of the "Surities for the Said Gilbert Livingston."[46]

To get out of the difficulty Gilbert, Henry and certain other sureties apparently went to work on the legislature with the result that two special and somewhat peculiar laws were passed. One reduced Gilbert's obligation to the government by £300. The other, and the more peculiar, empowered Gilbert to sell certain lands in New York City which had been willed rather vaguely to his wife by her father, Henry Beekman, Senior.

[44] *Assembly Journal*, I, 583; *Colonial Laws*, II, 454–60.

[45] J. Smith, 258.

[46] *Colonial Laws*, II, 51–52.

This act set forth the nature of Gilbert's obligation to the government and explained that his efforts to meet it had been impeded by those who questioned his right to sell lands inherited by his wife from her father. These objections seem to have come from Jacob Rutsen, uncle of the children born to John Rutsen, deceased, and his wife Catharine Beekman, who had since become the wife of Albert Pawling. Rutsen was also a surety to Gilbert's obligation to the government, but his apprehensions on this score were apparently outweighed by his fear that if Cornelia Beekman's husband were authorized to sell lands willed to her by her father, then Catharine Beekman's third husband, Albert Pawling, would also be held justified in selling property which Catharine had inherited in the same way. This, Jacob Rutsen apparently thought, would be unfair to his brother's children. However, despite his opposition, both the measures became law.[47]

The authorities in Britain were a little puzzled by this legislation, but after a clarifying act had been passed in 1722, the Attorney General advised the Council of Trade and Plantations that he saw no legal objection to the provisions.[48] Subsequently, when Henry Beekman, Gilbert Livingston, and Albert Pawling had all become members of the Assembly, the two Beekman sisters sought authorization to sell *all* lands conveyed to them by their father, but again Rutsen objected and this time no law was passed.[49] Beekman and his brothers-in-law seem to have served their own interests better as lobbyists than as legislators, but perhaps they had reached agreement with Rutsen. In any case such were the property problems which occupied much of Henry Beekman's time.

When the placid Governor Montgomery died in 1732 he was succeeded by William Cosby, an autocratic spoilsman,[50] who

[47] *Ibid.*, 51–52, 80–83.

[48] *Ibid.*, 118–21; *Calendar of State Papers, 1724–25*, no. 89.

[49] *Assembly Journal*, I, 593, 598–99, 601.

[50] For an account of one particularly offensive incident in which Cosby as Governor of Minorca used his official powers to augment his fortunes, see Colden's "History of Governor William Cosby's Administration and of Lieutenant Governor George Clarke's Administration through 1737," NYHS *Collections, 1935*, 283–355.

stirred up again the contest between the Governor and the Assembly. Initially Cosby was very popular because of his purported role in defeating legislation sponsored in Parliament by West Indian sugar planters and designed to secure for them a monopoly of the colonial market for sugar and molasses. Upon his arrival, however, Cosby with some support in the ambiguity of British regulations attempted to collect from Rip Van Dam, who had been acting as governor since the death of Montgomery, half of the perquisites of office for that period. Led by the Colony's most outstanding lawyers, the provincials promptly and vigorously rallied to Van Dam's support in claiming that the rewards attached to the office rather than to a person. Chief Justice Lewis Morris accepted the contention of Van Dam's counsel, William Smith and James Alexander, that the court of exchequer in which the equity action was brought on Cosby's behalf was without statutory basis and hence had no constitutional existence. Morris published his opinion in Peter Zenger's *Weekly Journal* which had been established as an opposition organ, and was peremptorily dismissed from his judicial office by the Governor to be replaced by Beekman's nephew, James De Lancey. The denunciations of the Governor in Zenger's paper increased steadily in vigor.

Henry Beekman appears to have worked closely with Cosby at first. As in Burnet's administration his reasons were to be found on the frontier where the French in 1731 had constructed military installations at Crown Point to supplement Fort Niagara which had been set up in 1726. Henry and a few other Assemblymen had conferred with members of the Council on this problem before Cosby's arrival,[51] apparently to work out plans to present to him. When the Assembly convened after Cosby's arrival Henry was one of the two representatives who welcomed him on behalf of the Assembly and after the Governor had delivered his customary message to the Assembly it was Henry who presided as the Governor's recommendations were considered in Committee of the Whole.

[51] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 317.

These deliberations culminated in the passage of an act "to Discharge the Several Demands on the Trading House at Oswego, To Support his Majesties Troops posted there, to regulate the Indian Trade, to prevent Abuses in the Same, and for other purposes."[52]

Cooperative as Henry had been on this important matter, he probably won more favor with Cosby by his exercise of legislative leadership on the question of a suitable reward to the Governor for his opposition to the lobbying of the West Indian sugar planters in Parliament. Henry seems to have been the principal sponsor of the measure which appropriated £1000 in appreciation for the Governor's assumed efforts which Cadwallader Colden denounced as "a mere pretence of a party that intended to ingratiat themselves in his favor."[53] The five-year support of the government voted at this time was also probably attributable in some degree to the influence of Henry Beekman. Henry's motivations are of course impossible to determine, but it seems likely, in view of his usual stand on questions of prerogative, that he was hoping to convince Cosby that there was more to be gained by cooperating with the Assembly than by opposing it. It is worthy of note that at this same session in which the Assembly seemed so much under Beekman's influence measures were passed to provide for the appointment and the payment of an agent to represent the Colony in England[54] and a resolution was adopted asserting that no fees should be collected by any officer of the government or any practitioner of law except as authorized and determined by the Assembly. Beekman was a member of the committee which was to set the rates.[55]

This legislative session of 1732 in which Henry was so influential lasted only from August to October; after that time and throughout a colorless session of 1733 in which Henry appears to have exercised no influence at all, public concern centered less in the legislature and more in the courts and the

[52] *Assembly Journal*, I, 633, 640–42; *Colonial Laws*, I, 788–806.

[53] *Assembly Journal*, I, 647; NYHS *Collections*, *1935*, 288.

[54] *Assembly Journal*, I, 647.

[55] *Ibid.*, 637.

press where Cosby's bid for power and wealth was heatedly contested and in England where rival representatives sought to influence what would probably be the decisive factor in the contest, the action of the crown officials.

Although the contest bypassed Assemblyman Beekman, Sheriff Beekman found himself in the middle of the battle. Cosby had reappointed Henry as Sheriff in 1732 and again in 1733.[56] Among his duties as Sheriff were those of providing jurors for both grand and petit juries. His powers in this regard were sufficient, as was recognized in sophisticated circles, to enable him usually to "stack" a jury in such a way as to guarantee a desired verdict.[57] The facts that Henry had been reappointed by Cosby and seemingly had served his interest in the Assembly led many to consider him "a Tool in the hands of some who would not fail to make a proper Use of him."[58] Accordingly when the government sought a grand jury indictment of Zenger in 1734 eyebrows were raised throughout New York that the jurors not only refused to indict Zenger, but instead challenged Chief Justice DeLancey to make public his case against the printer.[59] Then when Henry was not reappointed for another term Zenger's paper carried a tribute to "honest Henry Beekman, the late Sheriff, . . . for the Juries that have been summoned by him, both Grand and Petty, shew that he has behaved himself like an honest and impartial Man."[60] Within two months of Henry's retirement the new Sheriff had arrested Zenger for libel without a grand jury indictment and had had several issues of Zenger's paper publicly burned by his slave when the public hangman was barred by the New York City government from performing that odious act.[61] In view of the intensity of public feeling on the Zenger controversy it is doubtful that Henry regretted his departure from office.

[56] *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 318–19.

[57] NYHS *Collections*, *1935*, 305.

[58] *New York Journal*, September 9, 1734.

[59] NYHS *Collections*, *1935*, 321–22.

[60] *New York Journal*, September 9, 1734. Cosby did reappoint the Mayor of New York who had served as many terms as Beekman had (*Calendar of Council Minutes*, 322).

[61] NYHS *Collections*, *1935*, 322–23.

Meanwhile a reinvigorated Assembly had convened in April, 1734. Henry served this time on the powerful Committee on Grievances and on another committee to prepare legislation to regulate the excessive fees charged by government officers and lawyers.[62] He was also designated with one other member to prepare a bill "for the regulating and returning able and sufficient Jurors in Trials at Law."[63] When the Council, greatly exercised over the continuing abuse of the Governor in Zenger's paper, demanded a conference with Assembly representatives to consider a plea to the Governor for action, Henry undoubtedly supported the decision of the House to defer action on the urgent appeal from Friday to Tuesday and then disdainfully to table it.[64] In a final gesture of defiance after Zenger had been arrested and before it adjourned, the Assembly passed unanimously a resolution expressing its desire for dissolution which would be followed by a new election in which the Governor could be specifically repudiated by the voters. The Governor refused to oblige.[65]

After the momentous trial of Peter Zenger had concluded in his acquittal and created a glowing precedent for freedom of the press, the Assembly reconvened and took up again its battle with the Governor. A unanimous request for dissolution was again refused by the Governor[66] whereupon the House brought out one of its stronger resolutions, the denunciation of the existence of a court of chancery without its authorization as unlawful and "of dangerous Consequences to the Liberties and Properties of the People,"[67] but even this failed to influence Cosby as it had Burnet. Cosby was to prove a formidable opponent even on his death bed.

Local interests continued to receive some of Beekman's attention despite his preoccupation with more important

[62] *Assembly Journal*, I, 655, 660.

[63] *Ibid.*, 658. The bill which resulted passed the Assembly, but failed to become law because of differences between the Assembly and the Council (*Assembly Journal*, I, 668). It probably contained some of the excellent reform provisions included in the law which was passed in 1741 (*Colonial Laws*, III, 185–92).

[64] *Assembly Journal*, 671–72.

[65] *Ibid*, 679–80.

[66] *Ibid.*, 686.

[67] *Ibid.*, 687.

problems during the turbulent administration of Governor Cosby. Henry took the lead in renewing the previous highway act for Dutchess County which expired in 1730 and in passing a new measure "for Regulating the Rutts of Waggons." This required that all wagons or carts to be used on Dutchess County highways after May 1, 1735, be so constructed as to leave a track no more or no less than four feet and ten inches in width.[68] Henry seems to have participated also in preparing a measure which created an Assembly seat for the Manor of Cortlandt, the possession of his wife's brother.[69] He probably had a hand, too, in Assembly action which saved Dutchess County the expenses of a circuit court session in 1734 when there were no cases to be tried.[70]

Following the death of Cosby in 1735 there was almost revolution in New York. On his deathbed the detested executive had suspended the popular Councillor Van Dam whose seniority entitled him to the post of acting Governor in the event of the Governor's death. The suspension of Van Dam left that position to George Clarke, an intimate associate of Cosby and hence almost as unpopular as the dying Governor. Those who had supported Van Dam in the quarrel initiated at the time of Cosby's arrival now put their legal talents to work to demonstrate that Van Dam's suspension was invalid. Their legal position was virtually untenable, but popular support for it was strong. Consequently, there were for a time rival claimants to the role of executive and there were duplicate appointments to some offices. Fortunately Clarke conducted himself with great discretion and when at last his position was upheld by the officials in London comparative harmony returned.

Clarke's policy was relatively simple. He wanted to please Whitehall by securing a long-term revenue grant to replace that won by Cosby in 1732 which would expire in 1737. Repeatedly he pointed out in letters to London that the present Assembly, elected in 1728, would be likely to renew such a

[68] *Ibid.*, 641, 643–44, 662, 667; *Colonial Laws*, I, 749–50, 834–35.

[69] *Assembly Journal*, I, 667.

[70] *Ibid.*, 662.

revenue grant but were new elections to be held, as would be expected or even demanded upon the arrival of a new governor, Clarke was sure that a majority hostile to such a long-term revenue grant would be returned. Clarke was sure too, as he informed his superiors in England, that a new Assembly elected while the present spirit prevailed in the Colony would not grant even an annual revenue without such concessions as (1) elimination of the present equity court which had been set up under the royal prerogative and establishment of courts by act of the Assembly, (2) appointment of judges to serve during good behavior rather than during the Governor's pleasure, (3) statutory provision for triennial election of Assemblymen, (4) that officers of the crown should be dependent upon the Assembly not only for their salaries but also for their fees so that "by retrenching their fees" the Assemblymen could see that no one could "serve His Majesty faithfully and not starve."[71] It may or may not have been incidental to Clarke's thinking that deferring the appointment of a new Governor left him in power.

Henry Beekman's role in this renewal of the struggle between executive and Assembly is difficult to determine. He had supported the long-term revenue grant in 1732, but he had also favored three of the four elements in the radical program which Clarke delineated. The point to which he had not yet committed himself, the appointment of judges to serve during good behavior, was a relatively new issue; the official records do not indicate what stand Henry had taken on the question, but the probability is that this reform also received his support. In the personal contest between Clarke and Van Dam, Henry almost certainly preferred the latter, but what he did about his preference is unknown.

The important issue in the Assembly in 1736 and in early 1737 was which came first, renewal of the revenue grant or dissolution of the Assembly and new elections. The popular leaders jockeyed to prevent or to delay convening of the Assembly and, apparently with the help of Henry Beekman, suc-

[71] *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 63.

ceeded in deferring the session until October 1736.[72] The imminence of winter and of the freezing of the Hudson thus forced adjournment before much had been achieved and in the spring the popular party won its point.

The conduct of the Assembly in its spring session demonstrated clearly that Clarke was not to get the long-term revenue grant he sought. Again Henry Beekman was in a prominent position. He was a member of the Committee on Grievances; he was appointed with Lewis Morris, Jr., and one of the Philipses to draft legislation for the regulation of fees and with another member to revise legislation on the justice-of-the-peace courts.[73] Although ex-Sheriff Beekman probably helped defeat the Morris faction on a measure to bar from the Assembly any member who after his election accepted "any Office of Profit" from the Governor, yet he probably supported that faction in passing a deficiency appropriation bill which excluded the customary fee of the Auditor General for auditing the accounts of the colonial Treasurer and specified most rigorously the purposes for which the money appropriated could be expended. It provided Clarke only half of the salary of a governor for the period after Cosby's death, when as President of the Council he had begun to exercise executive authority, and before his appointment as Lieutenant Governor. This stroke won the contest; Clarke dissolved the Assembly on May 3, 1737.[74]

Henry was returned as always for Dutchess County but there were many new faces after the election of 1737. Most of the newcomers were of the popular persuasion and apparently this infusion of support enabled the Morris faction initially to rule the Assembly without reliance upon the representatives from Dutchess. In any case the Morris followers introduced a comprehensive set of reform measures and although Henry had supported nearly all of them previously none of them now bore his name as sponsor.

During the summer recess, however, the Morris faction

[72] McAnear, 475.

[73] *Assembly Journal*, I, 696, 698.

[74] *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 94; NYHS *Collections*, *1935*, 350–51; *Colonial Laws*, II, 1036.

alienated many of its supporters by coming to terms with Clarke. Although its leaders had reacted to the dismissal of Lewis Morris as Chief Justice by demanding that judges be appointed to serve during good behavior rather than during the Governor's pleasure, they now induced Clarke to remove all the old officers, including justices of the peace, in Westchester County and replace them with Morris followers. The popular reaction against this conduct was reflected in a by-election in New York City when Adolph Philipse, long the Speaker of the House until overwhelmingly defeated by the Morris faction in the regular election of 1737, edged out the Morris candidate in a hotly disputed contest. Protests over the conduct of the election were heard at great length in the Assembly and as Morris had previously induced the House to record its votes it can be stated that Henry Beekman voted regularly in favor of Philipse. His return to the Assembly was characterized by Cadwallader Colden as a great gain for those opposed to the royal prerogative for Philipse was an uncompromising opponent of the British authorities; Morris was not averse to working with them when it served his ends.[75]

Although enough mavericks had deserted Morris to seat Philipse, the next two years found the Morris faction usually predominant over the forces rallied by Philipse and Henry Beekman. Henry did succeed, however, in securing acceptance of a measure guaranteeing that non-resident as well as resident freeholders of a constituency should be permitted to vote, a principle which had been challenged in the Philipse contest.[76] When the Morris group pushed through a bill to provide a subsidy for a school in New York, Henry was in opposition perhaps out of conservatism but possibly also because the strong Anglican flavor of the measure excited his Dutch Calvinist prejudices.[77] The votes on tax measures to support the provincial agent in London showed Henry in the minority which opposed resort to a duty on locally distilled liquor or additional levies on real and personal property. He wanted the

[75] NYHS *Collections, 1935*, 354.
[76] *Assembly Journal*, I, 717.
[77] *Ibid.*, 727.

load to be borne by the revenue from peddler license fees.[78] That Henry had not lost completely the confidence of the majority of his colleagues is also evident in that he was delegated to prepare a bill for the relief of insolvent debtors. Dissolution came, however, before the measure was approved.[79]

Dissolution came as the climax of a contest with Clarke which created divisions within the Assembly throughout the sessions of 1737 and 1738. In part the issue concerned salaries. In both 1737 and 1738 Henry voted regularly with a minority which attempted to limit Clarke's salary to half that to which a governor was entitled; he also favored lower salaries for the Supreme Court judges who were cronies of Clarke's.[80] On the other hand he voted with the majority in favor of a higher salary for the colonial Treasurer who was the creature of the Assembly rather than of the executive.[81] It is virtually certain too, although no vote was recorded on the point, that Henry favored the one-year revenue grant of 1737 which provided that the taxes imposed should be paid to the provincial Treasurer and that there should be no payment made from those funds except as authorized by subsequent acts of the Assembly. Instead of trusting the executive to spend funds in accordance with specifications set forth in resolutions as it had since Hunter's time, the Assembly had demanded and received Clarke's acquiescence to a statute which forced him to seek authorization from the Assembly for the expenditure of the revenue which it raised for the support of routine government functions.[82] "It would be difficult," wrote a close student of the rise of the Assembly, "to overestimate the importance of this achievement."[83]

The achievement was placed in jeopardy the following year, however, for as Clarke had long been aware, a liquor excise tax ear-marked for the retirement of circulating paper currency was to expire in 1739 without having produced nearly enough revenue to accomplish its purpose. He was determined not to

[78] *Ibid.*, 745.
[79] *Ibid.*, 743.
[80] *Ibid.*, 724, 742.
[81] *Ibid.*, 744.
[82] *Colonial Laws*, I, 1047–61.
[83] Spencer, 187.

approve a renewal of the tax or of any other measure to support the circulating paper currency unless he received in return a long-term grant of revenue.[84] He underestimated, however, the determination of his opponents. Henry and *all* his colleagues resolved in unequivocal terms that they would not pass *any* bill for the support of the government until assured that the tax measure necessary to retire the currency would be approved. Later the majority of the Assemblymen added insult to injury by ordering preparation of one bill to provide for both a one-year extension of the revenue and continuation of the liquor excise for as long as would be necessary to retire the paper money. Frustrated, Clarke dissolved the Assembly.[85]

Because of its flirtations with Clarke on matters of patronage and salary, the Morris group found its numbers reduced considerably in the Assembly elected in 1739 and as a result Adolph Philipse, veteran Speaker, was restored to that position. Although Philipse himself often voted with the minority in this Assembly, Henry Beekman was much more often with the majority than he had been in the two previous years.

The issue which had brought about dissolution of the previous Assembly was now resolved. Henry and the overwhelming majority of his colleagues approved measures to provide for the collection of revenues for support of the government until the end of 1740, but as in 1737 the acts prohibited any expenditure of the funds except as specifically authorized by statute.[86] They also passed a bill to continue until 1757 the expiring liquor excise upon which the paper currency was based. Clarke signed this bill on October 25, 1739.[87] On November 8 the Assembly approved without a record vote "An Act to Apply the Monies Granted for the Support of this Government, as well for Discharging the Salaries & Contingencies that have accrude already, as those that will become Due by the first Day of September One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty." In twelve pages the measure defined narrowly the amounts and the purposes for which the Treasurer

[84] *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 95.
[85] *Assembly Journal*, I, 746–48.
[86] *Colonial Laws*, III, 2, 31–34.
[87] *Ibid.*, 21–30.

was authorized to pay warrants by the Governor and Council. Expenditures for salaries were authorized to be paid not just to the holders of certain offices, but to named individuals who held those offices. Clarke assented quietly on November 17.[88]

In the remaining period of Clarke's administration Henry Beekman seems to have maintained a fairly magnanimous attitude. When divisions occurred on questions of official salaries, he usually voted in favor of the more generous allotment.[89] Although he had opposed the subsidy for education, he voted in 1740 with the relatively small majority which favored paying the teacher's claim for remuneration and in fact was made a member of the committee to prepare the necessary legislation.[90] He took an important role in the preparation of defense measures required by the imminence of war with France, and when in the minority on such questions it was because he wished to do more than the majority would agree to in the preparation of defense installations.[91]

Despite the hostility between the Assembly and the Lieutenant-Governor, Clarke still "consulted" Henry on patronage matters in Dutchess County. When Clarke asked him about the appointment of court assistants in Dutchess County, Henry wrote to his nephew and namesake, Henry Livingston, clerk of Dutchess County and chief lieutenant in Beekman's political machine, for information on the incumbents and for advice as to whom he should recommend in the event that new appointments were to be made.[92]

However, this did not mean that Henry had ceased to oppose Clarke when royal and provincial interests clashed. In the same letter in which he revealed that he was being consulted on patronage appointments Henry also informed Livingston that despite having been present for only the last four days of a short legislative session (spring, 1743) he had managed to win approval by the House of a measure to prevent the

[88] *Assembly Journal*, I, 773; *Colonial Laws*, II, 38–50.

[89] *Assembly Journal*, I, 763, 768, 771, 784. A reversal of this attitude is noted below.

[90] *Ibid.*, 788.

[91] *Ibid.*, 760, 781, 796, 800, 803.

[92] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, May 2, 1743.

Attorney General "from proceeding by Information unless recognezence first Entered in by the plaintif for Cost."

This represented a new approach to a problem with which the provincials had been grappling since the time of Henry's father. It had two aspects. In the first place the defendant in a Crown action, even when acquitted, was required to pay the costs of the case. In the second place the Attorney General was authorized to prosecute on the basis of "Information" which he might possess even if a grand jury would not indict on the basis of that information. Actions for the collection of quitrents frequently had to be brought in this manner because indictments could almost never be obtained in such cases. Furthermore, the Attorney General was encouraged to bring such actions because the Assembly had long since cut off his salary and thus left him dependent on court fees for his income.[93] Finally, actions for non-payment of quitrent could be used to embarrass political opponents of the government and at the very least the costs of the action, including the Attorney General's fees, would be borne by the defendant.[94]

Acts aimed at the evils of prosecution by "Information" and assessment of all costs to the defendant whether guilty or innocent had been passed in 1708 and in 1727, but each had been disallowed.[95] Henry's measure of 1743 apparently would have forced the Attorney General to pay costs if he lost a case in which he had proceeded by information and to post a bond to guarantee such payment before a prosecution by information could be commenced. Such a measure would certainly have tended to discourage the Attorney General from prosecuting indiscriminately by information and thus would have protected provincials to some extent from an effective form of retaliation for political opposition. It was still in the Council when the arrival of Governor Clinton resulted in the dissolution of the Assembly.

That he favored carrying political warfare to the repre-

[93] Spencer, 174.

[94] NYHS *Collections, 1934*, 235.

[95] *Colonial Laws*, I, 623; II, 406–07. See also *Doc. Rel.*, V, 17–18, 929; *Assembly Journal*, I, 224.

sentative of the crown Henry demonstrated also in 1741 when another dispute arose over the support of the government. Twice Henry voted, the second time in the minority, against making any appropriation for support of the government until measures for the "Benefit of the Inhabitants" had been enacted into law.[96] It was probably on this same principle also that he voted with the minority which opposed the usual appropriation measures for Clarke's salary and his house rent in the period just before Governor Clinton's arrival.[97]

George Clinton, whose administration lasted from 1743 to 1753, was a naval officer possessed of the disposition to command but not of the character to induce people to obey. He relied heavily for advice first on Henry Beekman's nephew, that consummate politician who was then Chief Justice, James De Lancey. After De Lancey deserted to the opposition Clinton turned to the talented but unpopular Cadwallader Colden. Clinton's administration faced not only the tremendous task of attempting to regain some of the constitutional ground lost to the provincials under Clarke, but also the necessity of fighting the war of 1744–1748 against the French on the frontier. Progress in each case was retarded by the mere existence of the other problem.

The war effort indeed suffered considerably from the zeal of Henry Beekman and his colleagues to protect and extend their own power. The rivalry between Assembly and Governor came to a head in 1746 when in mounting an offensive against Canada the Governor instructed his subordinates to break into a warehouse at Albany and take needed supplies which the two purchasing commissioners, both creatures of the Assembly, had refused to provide because of the absence of specific statutory authority to do so under the conditions which prevailed. This action of the Governor the outraged Assemblymen denounced in vigorous resolutions which became models for many of their future communications to the chief executive.[98]

Next year when the Governor suggested rather strongly

[96] *Assembly Journal*, I, 815, 825.
[97] *Ibid.*, 818 819, 825.
[98] *Assembly Journal*, II, 134–39.

that the Assembly in its deliberations should give priority to certain defense measures, the House passed without opposition a series of resolutions denouncing this action on constitutional grounds and branding the anonymous adviser of the Governor who had suggested it "an Enemy of the Inhabitants." In the same spirit the Assembly prepared a long remonstrance to the Governor setting forth its grievances. Clinton hardly helped matters by refusing to receive the committee, including Henry Beekman, which was instructed to present the remonstrance, nor by forbidding its publication. These actions in fact led to another set of resolutions unanimously adopted which emphasized the themes of freedom of the press and the privileges of the Assembly. To these Clinton responded by dissolving the House and calling new elections;[99] the results brought no improvement in harmony between the two branches of the provincial government.

In the new session Beekman created an issue over the Governor's conduct in instructing judge, county clerk, and sheriff in Dutchess County not to allow soldiers there to complete legal actions which they had brought against their captain for pay and allowances. Henry thought that if the facts had been truly represented to him these acts of the Governor constituted "such a Violation of the Laws, such a Grievance upon the People, such an Attempt and Infringement upon their Rights and Properties as calls loudly for Redress." The Assembly at once complied with his request for an investigation and prudently provided that the investigators should be authorized to sit "notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House." Clinton privately denounced this action as "that Foole Beekman's Motion" inspired with trouble-making intent by Chief Justice De Lancey. He thought he had "queld" the issue by stating publicly that he had had no intention "to infringe upon any Man's Right or Property," but was only attempting to prevent deserters who had forfeited their pay and may have gone off with government equipment from col-

[99] *Ibid.*, II, 173–80, 191–205.

lecting that to which they were not entitled. He confessed by implication that he had been guilty of "Inadvertency."[100]

Henry was also keeping tab on Clinton in other ways. He and another representative presented to the Governor a resolution demanding that all accounts to be paid by the House should be sworn to and should indicate the service for which payment was to be made, the time at which the service was rendered, and the authorization for the expenditure. Henry reported to the House that "His Excellency was pleased to say, it was very well." Earlier that year Henry may well have caused the Governor a headache or two by his role in preparation of defense bills and as one of the auditors of the accounts of the supply commissioners for the attack on Canada.[101]

Henry's efforts during the war period were by no means exclusively obstructionist, however. Although little was apparently expected of him as militia leader in Dutchess County, he did carry out effectively instructions for the compilation of a full list of all men in Dutchess County who were "eligible" for military service.[102] More important Henry took a leading role in the formulation of much legislation which was vital to the conduct of the war and when he differed with the majority of his colleagues it was usually because he wished to appropriate more money for military purposes or to go farther in the development of intercolonial cooperation against the enemy. Henry was in fact one of those who selected the commissioners who were to represent New York in negotiations with the delegates from other colonies.[103]

Wartime brought with it as usual severe repression of civil liberties, but as always there were some to object and among these was Henry Beekman. The principal victims of the repression were Moravian missionaries and their converts. The Moravians, firmly opposed to war and to oaths of any kind, favored complete separations of church and state and believed

[100] NYHS *Collections, 1920*, 69; *Assembly Journal*, II, 240–41.

[101] *Assembly Journal*, II, 255, 256, 225, 228, 232

[102] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, November 22, 1745.

[103] *Assembly Journal*, II, 102–04.

it the duty of their Church to evangelize the heathen. It was this motivation which in about 1740 had led to the establishment of a Moravian mission in northern Dutchess County near the present town of Pine Plains. Spurred by a visit of the great German leader, Count Zinzendorf, in 1742, the Dutchess County mission, unique in the Province, had gained an appreciable number of Indian and some white converts by the time the war broke out in 1744. The Moravians were of course close to the battle zone and were known to be influential among the Indians who as a whole were more sympathetic to the French than to the English. These facts plus the refusal of the missionaries to support the war or to take the required oath led them to be branded by some as papists and traitors.

Late in the spring of 1744 Governor Clinton, yielding to the alarmists, instructed Colonel Beekman, commander of the militia in Dutchess County, to investigate the charges that the Moravians were seducing the local Indians from their allegiance to the British. If he found cause for suspicion, Henry was to throw the leaders in jail. He was also instructed to make a search for arms and ammunition and to disperse the Indian converts.

The appearance of Henry's forces at the mission created consternation among the missionaries and the forty-four Indian converts hard at work on their "plantations." Nevertheless the delegation was politely received; its members found few weapons and no ammunition. Henry imprisoned no one and caused none to disperse. Furthermore, when Clinton himself summoned the missionaries to New York for further interrogation, Henry "publicly defended them . . . and affirmed that the good done by them among the Indians was undeniable." Clinton merely ordered that they go home and live peaceably.[104]

In the fall, however, legislation was enacted which provided fines and imprisonment for all who refused to take a lengthy oath of loyalty; it provided further that no religious meeting

[104] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 613–26; J. Smith, Chapter V, especially pages 33–35; *Yearbook*, to Gilbert Livingston, June 18, 1744.

could take place without notice to a justice of the peace and that no "Vagrant Preacher, Moravian, or Disguised Papist" could preach among the Indians without license from the Governor.[105] Under this law Clinton at the end of 1744 ordered the Moravians to cease preaching and to depart from the Province. Henry Beekman had voted in favor of the bill in the Assembly,[106] but a pledge in one of his letters of early 1745 to "Stand by" a Dutchess County group which was in trouble with the government may have referred to the Moravians.[107] In any case Henry was one of four Assemblymen to oppose renewal of the repressive statute in 1745,[108] but the Moravians and their converts found it expedient to emigrate to the more hospitable climate of Pennsylvania.

Another piece of repressive legislation, an act "to prevent and punish Mutiny and Desertion of his Majesty's Forces," passed the Assembly early in 1746 over the opposition of Henry Beekman and a substantial minority of his colleagues.[109]

On issues not related to the war Beekman gave still more evidence of determination to advance the cause of representative government. In 1745 he was still carrying on the battle against prosecution by information[110] and in 1747, when the Assembly and the Governor were fighting bitterly, he reported to his nephew that in case of dissolution all the members of the Assembly had agreed "to Set up and Joyn so al to Come again in the same body if possable. The Time is come to such Crises that Sumthing must at all Events be tryd to Save our Contry case the Governour wil pase non of our Laws which are now before him."[111] Henry no doubt would have pleaded guilty to the charge which Clinton levied in 1748 that the Assembly members when in dispute with the executive seemed inclined to take their case to the populace as the final arbiter; Clinton

[105] *Colonial Laws*, III, 424–29.

[106] *Assembly Journal*, II, 28, 41.

[107] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, February 13, 1745.

[108] *Assembly Journal*, II, 73.

[109] *Ibid.*, 98; *Colonial Laws*, III, 538–40.

[110] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, February 13, 1745.

[111] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, November 12, 1747. See also the letter to Henry Livingston dated December 7, 1748, in which Beekman expresses disgust at the "Condensention" shown the Governor.

thought they were forgetting their "dependency" and that the King and Parliament might take a different view as to the identity of the proper adjudicating authority.[112]

This was indeed the issue. Henry had defined it in his inimitable way as early as January, 1745.

> Here is an Account from England [*he wrote his nephew*] that a bil is prepared to be brought in this parlement now Siting this January for regulating all Bills of Credit in the plantations. so far there is no gret folt; But another Claus there too Commanding all Governors Councel Assemblys for the future to pay and adhere to all Ordenances and Instructions and to pay true obediance thereto as they shall git transmited ordered and Derected from time to time from the King and his privee Councel, if Such Act Doe pas in a Law stricks Emediately at the Liberty, of the Subject and Establish arbetrary pour to all the Contenant and Islands in America and Else where under the Kings Dominions, hath alarmed the American world and put Every thinking man to Consternation how Ever we are not without hopes but so great an house as that [Parliament] of the whole nation will not Doe things so rash; for in the preparing Slavery to us would give a presedent and hand it against themselves.[113]

The Assembly as a whole expressed similar sentiments when it took up the question after reconvening in March. It also commended those, among whom Henry was probably included, who had acted on their own initiative during January to organize a lobby in London against the dangerous provisions.[114] Henry's sentiments were also reflected in the Assembly statement that "faithful Representatives of the People, could never recede from the Method of an annual Support" and return to the practice of making long-term revenue grants as Clinton desired. Beekman undoubtedly concurred, too, in the sentiment that "no Inconveniences how great soever, to which our own Persons or private affairs may be exposed, by Means of our being kept here [by prolonging the legislative session], shall ever prevail upon us, to abandon the true Interest of our Country."[115] When the Council expressed the desire in 1751 to see the accounts upon which certain appropriation measures

[112] *Assembly Journal*, II, 258, 269.

[113] NYHS, Henry Beekman Manuscripts, to Henry Livingston, January 7, 1745. This collection of letters is cited hereafter as Henry Beekman Mss.

[114] *Assembly Journal*, II, 47, 50.

[115] *Ibid.*, 262, 266.

were based, it was Henry Beekman who with one other Assemblyman replied on behalf of the Assembly that there was no precedent for such action and that its possible consequences would have to be investigated by the House. When the irritated Council members then passed an appropriation measure of their own drafting, the Assembly rejected it unanimously as contravening the exclusive right of the lower chamber to inaugurate monetary measures.[116] There is no indication that the Council ever won access to the accounts it sought.

That Beekman, despite his opposition to the Governor's policies, could still select the candidates to be appointed by the Governor to local offices in Dutchess County seems strange to those acquainted with modern politics, but such was usually the case. So routine were patronage matters to Henry in 1744 that he confessed to his nephew and political lieutenant, Henry Livingston, that he had forgotten on a trip home "to Consult for a fit person to be a Corronner." More than a year later he "proposed" to the Governor two persons to be coroners for Dutchess County. Henry's letters to his nephew indicate also that he made "recommendations" for the appointment of militia officers, justices of the peace, and sheriff.[117]

Clinton's attitude toward these appointments is suggested in several of Beekman's letters. When his brother-in-law Gilbert Livingston aspired to be commissioned a justice of the peace Henry suggested that payment of three or four pistols to the Governor's secretary would be in order.[118] Later Henry expressed doubt that Clinton would accept troops offered by the Governor of Connecticut on the condition that they be authorized to name their own officers. This, remarked Henry, would bring "no grist to his [Clinton's] mill."[119] In the same letter Henry noted that Louis DeBois had expressed his intention to apply for a commission—if Cadwallader Colden had

[116] *Ibid.*, 325–27.

[117] Henry Beekman Mss., to Gilbert Livingston, December 8, 1744; *Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II, 576. See also Beekman's letters of the following dates to either Gilbert or Henry Livingston: May 1, 1744; May 9, 1744; July 6, 1745; December 3, 1945; January 21, 1747; February 3, 1747.

[118] Henry Beekman Mss., to Gilbert Livingston, August 11, 1744.

[119] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, November 26, 1747.

gone home to Ulster County. The implication was that without Colden's restraining influence Clinton would commission anyone who paid him enough. As Beekman observed: "money only hath sance."

Beekman's control of patronage in Dutchess County was challenged in 1746 by his fellow Assemblyman, Johannis Tappen. Tappen's voting strength apparently lay in sections of the County owned by "Messrs. Chambers & Philips,"[120] probably Abraham G. Chambers, former Assemblyman from Ulster County, and Frederick Philipse, Assemblyman from Westchester, both of whose families owned extensive tracts in Dutchess County although their primary holdings were in the counties mentioned. Tappen suggested to the Governor that Henry's brother-in-law, Gilbert Livingston, should be relieved of his commission as colonel in the Dutchess County militia because he lived in another county (Ulster) and was in very poor health (he died later that year). Although Tappen may not have aspired to name a militia colonel to replace Livingston, Henry, prompted apparently by the Governor, assumed that he did. Henry vowed to Livingston that Tappen would name none of the militia officers in the County or all of them. Subsequent letters seem to suggest that Tappen named none.[121]

Control of the patronage, however, was not an unmixed political blessing. At the time when the Assembly was engaged in bitter controversy with the Governor such control lent some color to the story which Tappen took home from New York to the effect that Beekman had advised the Governor to imitate Cromwell by shooting a soldier or two in order to improve discipline[122] and that Henry was much the Governor's friend. This, wrote Henry, "is so false that I have not spoke a word to him this six month except on business of the house" when the relationship was anything but cordial. Henry referred his con-

[120] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, February 10, 1750.

[121] *Ibid.*, to Gilbert Livingston, January 3, 1746; to Henry Livingston, January 7, 1747; January 21, 1747; February 3, 1747.

[122] Henry had made such a statement facetiously, but apparently Tappen had no sense of humor (Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, November 24, 1747).

stituents to the current newspaper which carried the story of the remonstrance presented by Henry and six other Assemblymen to the Governor under the most unfriendly circumstances.[123]

More serious than Tappen's challenge to Beekman's control of patronage was that by Cadwallader Colden. Colden, whose devotion to the prerogative was unexcelled, determined to use the patronage controlled by the Governor to construct a loyal political following for Clinton in the Assembly and thus undo the constitutional innovations which the Assembly had made in earlier years. As early as 1747 Henry found difficulty in getting commissions "for my regiment." Beekman's sheriff, Henry Filkin, lost his job in 1748; his judges went out in 1749.[124] In 1751 when his own commission in the militia was offered to a member of the Van Kleeck clan, Henry urged his nephew Henry Livingston to induce him to accept for, wrote Henry, if he did not, it might go to some one "we will like worse."[125]

Contesting Beekman's control of patronage was of course preliminary to an attempt to defeat him at the polls. One such contest took place in 1745. Henry, then fifty-seven, made it clear to his followers that he would prefer to retire if they could find an acceptable candidate to run for his seat,[126] but no such candidate was brought forth. Consequently Henry ran. It is not clear who ran with him for the two seats to which the county was entitled, but the opposition, comprised apparently of extreme opponents of the Governor and foot-draggers on the war effort,[127] chose Tappen and, if Beekman's pre-campaign guess was correct, either DuBois, Lister, or TerBoss. The victors were Beekman and Tappen.

[123] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, November 24, 1747.

[124] *Idem*; Edmund B. O'Callaghan (ed.), *Calendar of New York Colonial Commissions, 1680–1770* (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1929), 28, 30.

[125] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, December 19, 1751. Clinton wrote Colden, January 6, 1752, that he had "had a long visit from the Chief Justice [DeLancey;] . . . I expected it had been about my Turning out his Cousin [*i.e.*, relative] Beekman, but he did not mention it." NYHS *Collections, 1920*, 306.

[126] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, May 15, 1745.

[127] This assumption is based on differences in the voting records of Tappen and Beekman in the House. Tappen generally followed David Jones; Beekman tended to follow the majority which cooperated more closely with DeLancey on war measures.

In the election of 1747 Henry worried over the effects of Tappen's stories about his alleged friendship with the Governor and the distortion of his facetious suggestion on discipline,[128] but already Colden was emerging as the more important threat. Henry expected Colden to arrange that the sheriffs of Ulster and Dutchess Counties be instructed to call the elections in their respective counties for different days "so that he may be on both to Influance by his majestk prasance who the voters to Chuse."[129] With or without that presence the voters of Dutchess County again chose Beekman and Tappen.

As early as March, 1749, Beekman heard of "great preparations in sundry counties making for a new election." Colden had forged a new party on the anvil of patronage and was preparing to test his weapon. But Colden delayed. In January, 1750, Beekman expressed agreement with the opinion of a friend that "if Tappen and I Joyns all the skeems about a new Election will prove abortive."[130] Henry was soon convinced that Tappen desired such an alliance and that his word could be depended on, but he felt that since Chambers and Philipse had "an asandant over those men that Mr. Tappen mostly must depend [on] should thay, Chambers and Philipse, inSist on Tappens frends to fall in with a Skeem of theirs to Distress me. I doubt whether Mr. Tappen in such Case, would not be Constrained."[131] This, he thought, was the only way in which he could be defeated. Henry Livingston, to whom these words were addressed, construed them to suggest that Tappen and Colden's man Martin Hoffman might unite against Beekman, but Henry considered this unlikely. He also felt that were such an alliance to be consummated he "would not Dispared a Turned them both out As then he [Tappen] must have brook his word long agoe agreed on by him and his frends. Bleve am fast as to him,"

[128] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, November 24, 1747.

[129] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, November 26, 1747.

[130] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, January 19, 1750.

[131] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, February 10, 1750. In the same letter Beekman mentioned that he had had a friendly interview with Benjamin Ferris, George Soule, and other leading Quakers from Dutchess County. They were inclined to believe that all of the approximately 100 Quaker voters in the County would support Beekman.

Henry concluded, "and he shall be Sure to find me as to Stand and fall to gather."[132]

Tappen in fact stumbled badly almost at once and it took all of Henry's skill to salvage the political fortune of his ally even temporarily. While the election was actually in progress, Tappen was arrested for unpaid debts. Nevertheless, according to Beekman, the electors of Dutchess County voted unanimously in favor of the slate of Beekman and Tappen. Henry was a little disgusted that Tappen had not followed his advice as to how to avoid arrest but he hurried down to New York to do his utmost for the relief of his erstwhile enemy who languished meanwhile in the Dutchess County jail. Henry found Chief Justice DeLancey and Assembly Speaker David Jones both sympathetic to Tappen, but a little uncertain as to the best way to proceed in order to help him. At first Beekman and his advisers thought it would be desirable to bring a habeas corpus action and allow the courts to decide whether the Assemblyman's privilege against arrest began with the day of the election or only after his election. Henry expected that the arrest would be ruled invalid, that in the Assembly a motion to expel Tappen would be made and defeated, that a resolution suggesting that Tappen should give up all his estate to pay his creditors would then pass. Advice on the legal aspects of the problem came from Tappen's attorney, Joseph Murray, one of the Colony's most distinguished lawyers, but Henry found it increasingly difficult to induce Murray to find time for the case. Suspecting that some of Murray's evident reluctance to handle the case might stem from inadequate fees, Henry assured him: "I would Ingage he should be wel paid." When this failed to overcome Murray's reluctance and other efforts to find counsel proved unavailing Henry concluded that "as the Grandees of this town ar much against the releiving Mr. Tappen the great lawyers now Dont Care to be known to push hard." Consequently Henry, who was of course without legal training, had to make the decisions largely on his own

[132] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, March 22, 1750.

counsel; he wished one of the Dutchess County leaders would come down to share the burden with him.[133]

Soon Henry Filkin, former Sheriff of Dutchess County, arrived in New York and Beekman in consultation with him and some others, concluded that it would be best not to proceed at once by the writ of habeas corpus which Henry had finally induced the lawyers to complete. The lawyers were now not so sure that the courts would rule in Tappen's favor. Furthermore, presentation of a writ of habeas corpus at once would have required that Tappen be brought to New York and that the case be heard by the judges in their chambers. Henry's advisers thought the judges, "as times are and the Ise of Government upon them," would prefer to hear the case in open court at the regular October term in Poughkeepsie rather than in their chambers at New York. Finally, transporting Tappen to New York and, if he lost the case, back to Poughkeepsie would be expensive and "would make a tarible noise in the County." For these reasons it was decided to await the October term of the court at Poughkeepsie,[134] but this reckoned without the Assembly.

In the Assembly Henry had explained the situation briefly on September 21 and then noted that Dutchess County had by the arrest of Tappen been "deprived of the Service of one of its Representatives." This, he added, seemed to constitute "not only a Grievance, but to affect the Privilege of this House." Accordingly he moved that the affair be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.[135] On October 19, after Henry had arrived at the above decision but evidently before it had been put into effect, a group of Tappen's creditors petitioned that as he was arrested before the election he should not be released until he gave bail to answer their respective suits. That afternoon the Committee reported that Tappen had been arrested "on the Day, and at the Place of Election, though before the Election was actually made." The Committee felt

[133] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, September 4, 11, 18, 1750.

[134] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, September 26, 1750.

[135] *Assembly Journal*, II, 282.

that Tappen should not be "detained from the Service of the House." David Clarkson, a New York City member, then stated that he conceived it to be "of the most dangerous Consequence to take a Person from Goal, for Debt, and to admit such a Man a Member of this House." He thereupon moved that the Committee report be rejected; it was accepted, however, with only five dissenting votes, three of them from New York City. As dusk fell the Assembly ordered its Sergeant at Arms to serve the Sheriff of Dutchess County with its order that Tappen be immediately discharged "that he may attend the Service of this House." Apparently the Sheriff had already brought Tappen to New York, for the Sergeant at Arms reported next morning that Tappen had been released. Tappen himself then appeared and Henry Beekman triumphantly escorted him to take the oath of office.[136]

But Henry had not seen the end of the controversy. When Tappen failed to appear for the session of the legislature in 1751, Henry was forced to explain that Mr. Tappen "was departed out of the Colony, with a Design not to return again." Tappen was promptly "dismissed from the Service of this House," and although Henry reported that he had experienced some difficulty in persuading the Speaker and others that the election of a replacement should take place at once, it was so ordered.[137] Two days later Beekman wrote to Henry Livingston of his hope that Henry Filkin, the former sheriff, would replace Tappen. Within three weeks from the day of Tappen's dismissal Filkin had joined Beekman in the Assembly.[138]

Tappen was now gone but not forgotten, for the followers of Cadwallader Colden seized upon his case as campaign material for the election which was to take place early in 1752. Informed that accusations were circulating at home to the effect

[136] *Ibid.*, 293–94.

[137] *Ibid.*, 317; Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, October 23, 1751.

[138] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, October 25, 1751; *Assembly Journal*, II, 322. In December Henry wrote Livingston that, were another election to take place at a time when he could not be on hand, he would bear half of whatever election expenses Livingston and Filkin together thought necessary (Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, December, 1751).

that he had put up bail for Tappen and had sponsored a bill in the Assembly to pay his debts, Henry expressed surprise that this "helish Contrivance" which he thought had originated in New York could "have flowen to Duches so soon." He was equally surprised that "any of Common Sance would given Credit to such palpable Lies and So Easly Disproeved." He wrote reports of the situation for friends in Dutchess both in Dutch and English until he was "tyred of writing over and over the Same Story." He determined to obtain from the Speaker a certificate attesting that he had not done those things of which he was accused and with that and other materials to make up an "Advertizement to Strick up in the County."[139]

At Rhinebeck as the election approached Henry wrote to Livingston in Poughkeepsie that the opposition literature, "Don by priest [Chauncey] Graham," a Presbyterian clergyman allied with Colden, had not appeared in Rhinebeck; he intended to hold back his literature until after Graham's charges appeared. His discussion of campaign preparations revealed that Filkin was to provide beef, pork and "Backin" which Henry thought should be "Buylt a Day or 2 before the Election and brought to the Saverall Houses" of their chief supporters. He intended to bake 100 loaves of bread at Rhinebeck, to supply rum "to such houses wherein it can not be had," and to distribute cider and wine which were being donated by well-wishers. He sent "my negro" to help Livingston at Poughkeepsie until after the election. In view of these extensive preparations it is hardly surprising that campaign weariness showed through. He did not know, wrote Henry, "hoe shall manage [the campaign of] Filkin and I am Tyered Sum others I thinck should Bear a hand."[140] Henry triumphed again on election day, but although Filkin reported promptly for the brief fall session of the Assembly Henry did not bother to appear at all. He had done his work in defeating Colden's candidates.

Henry had in fact been tired for a long time. In 1745 he had suggested to Livingston in discussing a coming election that

[139] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, December 19, 1751.

[140] *Ibid.*, to Henry Livingston, January 23, 1752.

"If other good men Can be fixed on I had rather be out than in." He was willing to run, however, if his friends thought be should[141]; of course they did. Again when Tappen was accusing him of being a friend of the Governor in 1747, Henry observed disconsolately that "to avoyd malice Invy and Slander, and words falsely Interprated; find is unavoydable . . . shal take no payns for my Self to git in the Assambly at this time unless a great majority wil have it so."[142] Again his condition was met. During the vigorous contest of 1752 he confessed, "But this for a truth I have been tyred of assambley-ship maeny Years."[143] Despite this disenchantment and weariness Beekman continued to render valuable service in the Assembly for several years.

Henry cast a more tolerant eye toward the provincial executive in these remaining years of his political career than he had in the past for during nearly all of the period his nephew, James DeLancey, represented the crown. DeLancey's career was fabulous indeed. One of the few members of the provincial aristocracy to have gone abroad to study, he had made lasting and useful contacts at Cambridge; he also had relatives by marriage who were close to the King. Promoted from Judge to Chief Justice by Cosby when Morris was ousted, he incurred opprobrium for his role in the Zenger trial, but he overcame this handicap when under Clinton he deserted the "court" party to lead the popular opposition. Despite Clinton's full and frequent complaints to London about his conduct DeLancey was appointed Lieutenant-Governor in 1747. Clinton actually withheld the commission until the eve of his return to England in 1753, but when the new Governor, Sir Danvers Osborne, committed suicide upon gaining his first glimpse of the realities of New York politics, DeLancey succeeded to power which he exercised from then until his death in 1760, although from 1755 to 1757 he did so as "adviser" to another Governor, Sir Charles Hardy.

[141] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, May 15, 1745.

[142] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, November 24, 1747.

[143] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, December 19, 1751.

While Whitehall for years had ignored Clinton's repeated complaints of the usurpation of royal prerogatives by the "factious" provincial Assembly, its bureaucracy ultimately awoke to the danger and launched an investigation. As a result Osborne arrived in New York in 1753 with rigorous instructions. With his death it fell to DeLancey to carry them out. He was to make known the extreme displeasure of the British government at the neglect and the contempt with which the Assembly had treated the instructions to previous governors. He was to see that instructions were obeyed in the future. There was also a vaguely worded demand for a permanent and indefinite grant of revenue to be expended by warrant of the Governor in support of the government. Furthermore, any officer of the government who in any way promoted the impairment of the prerogative was to be suspended at once; the executive was not to accept special gifts from the Assembly, but was to take a salary of £1,200 sterling annually from the provincial revenue.[144]

The initial reaction of the Assembly leaders to the publication of these instructions was to draft a message to DeLancey affirming that the devotion of New Yorkers to the King and his government was unsurpassed and that whatever trouble had existed in the Province stemmed from the unsavory character of Governor Clinton, an allegation which would not have displeased DeLancey in the slightest. That Henry Beekman influenced the preparation of the statement is suggested by the fact that it gave first place among the charges levied against Clinton to the allegation first made by Henry that Clinton had interfered in the adjudication of cases in the courts of Dutchess County. Henry's disgruntlement over patronage may have been reflected, too, in the charge that Clinton had appointed to judicial office several illiterates and one perjuror. Whatever the degree of his participation in the framing of the message Henry was one of the two representatives delegated to present it to his nephew, "the Honourable James Delancey, Esq; his Majesty's Lieut. Governor and Commander in Chief,

[144] *Assembly Journal*, II, 352–53.

in and over the Colony of New York, and Territories depending thereon in America."[145]

A month later Henry again presented a message to his nephew on behalf of the Assembly. This one was to be forwarded to the King. It expressed "Abhorrence of those groundless Imputations of Disloyalty, most falsely and maliciously represented to your Majesty, against . . . the Inhabitants of this Colony" and asserted that "Surely none but Men destitute of Justice, Honour, and Veracity, could represent us in a Light so distant from Truth." The Assemblymen assured their "most gracious Sovereign" obsequiously that there was not a person born in the Province who would not "chearfully hazard his Life, his Fortune, and all that is dear to him" to defend the King.[146]

Henry also served as chairman of the committee which drafted a much longer "Representation" to the "Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations." This message conceded somewhat disingenuously that the Assembly would merit the King's displeasure and "much severer Marks of his royal Indignation" were it engaged as alleged in an attempt to "wrest the Government . . ., out of his Majesty's hands." It went on, however, to repeat, enlarge upon and supplement the earlier charges against Clinton. Among the new charges were the accusations that Clinton had misappropriated funds, had made land grants to himself under fictitious names, and had sold appointments to public office. More important, Henry and his colleagues defended the practice of making short-term revenue grants in support of the government and restricting narrowly the purpose for which the funds could be expended. This they stated with more honesty than tact had been found necessary over the years in order to prevent their Governors from converting as much as possible of the provincial revenue "to their own private Use and Benefit." New Yorkers were ready and always had been, they asserted, to support the government "in the best Manner we are able," but their words gave evidence

[145] *Ibid.*, 355–56. [146] *Ibid.*, 367.

of a strong determination to do it in their own manner and with adequate protection against misappropriation.[147]

The Lords of Trade were not impressed by this argument. It was strict appropriation of the revenues, they asserted, rather than annual renewal of revenue appropriations which was needed to prevent misapplication. They felt that the annual renewal of the revenue was desired only to wrest from the crown "the Nomination of all offices whose Salarys depend upon the annual appointment of the Assembly" and to eliminate those governmental functions "not entrusted even in their execution to such persons as the Assembly appoints under pretence of receiving and applying these annual grants." The Lords of Trade also instructed DeLancey to sign no measure for the issuance of paper money which did not provide that the act would go into effect only after approval in England; such currency, they thought, "ought by no Means to be declared a legal Tender."[148]

Henry and his colleagues refused to be intimidated. They asserted rather bluntly that their responsibility to their constituents would not permit them to "recede" from the practice of passing annually on measures for the support of the government. Although they recognized the pressing need for new issues of paper currency to help finance defense preparations required by the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the Assemblymen asserted that they would "decline proceeding on such a Bill" because of the "suspending clause" and the requirement that the currency not be made legal tender.[149]

The war emergency and skillful colonial diplomacy induced the Lords of Trade to modify their stand. Instructions to Governor Hardy in 1755 and 1756 permitted him to assent to temporary rather than permanent grants of revenue in "emergency" situations; the demand for permanent revenue was dropped in the interest of harmony during the war.[150] While Beekman remained in the Assembly it provided for no new issue of paper money.

[147] *Ibid.*, 367–72.

[148] *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 847; *Assembly Journal*, II, 409–10.

[149] *Assembly Journal*, II, 411–12.

[150] *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 948; VII, 40.

The power of British as opposed to provincial authorities was also at stake to some extent in the celebrated controversy over the founding of King's (Columbia) College. One would have expected Beekman in view of his background and his record to prefer a non-sectarian institution chartered by the Assembly rather than an Anglican-dominated school with a royal charter. However, it is worth noting that a number of Beekman's relatives, including his nephew, James DeLancey and his son-in-law Robert R. Livingston, were Anglican. Whatever the factors which influenced him, Beekman, after some vacillation, ultimately voted with the majority which favored an Anglican-dominated institution with a royal charter.[151] He was one of the Board of Governors appointed for the college in its charter from the King; he was also among those who demanded that its faculty include a Dutch Reformed professor of divinity.[152]

As the Seven Years' War got underway Henry Beekman was nearing seventy and he was tired, but he provided leadership on several important war measures. In 1755 he took to his nephew on behalf of the Assembly a set of resolutions which reflected the intention of the Assembly to cooperate fully and to allow him to exercise executive authority in the conduct of the war.[153] Henry apparently took a major hand in preparing legislation for the impressment of workers, horses, and wagons for the Crown Point expedition and in drafting a resolution affirming the duty of other colonies to bear a portion of its cost.[154] He also helped to prepare a bill to impose a stamp tax, a measure destined to be bitterly resisted when imposed from England at the close of the war, and a tax on tea. The stamp tax was allegedly found burdensome to the inhabitants and productive of little revenue, but one of Henry's last votes in the Assembly was cast to defeat its repeal.[155] Initially Henry opposed an important measure to "restrain the Exportation

[151] *Assembly Journal*, II, 392, 396, 419, 421–22.

[152] *Ecc. Rec.*, V, 3508, 3544.

[153] *Assembly Journal*, II, 439.

[154] *Ibid.*, 443.

[155] *Ibid.*, 505, 511, 518–19, 572.

of Provisions and warlike Stores," but when it eventually passed he was one of the two assemblymen who took it to the Council.[156]

Henry's zeal to advance the war effort did not cause him to ignore the problems which it created for his constituents. He exerted himself to obtain remuneration for those who had monetary claims against the government for military service of one kind or another; he strove vainly to secure passage of measures to improve the defensive posture of frontier residents and to exempt frontier counties from military personnel quotas because so many of their residents were engaged in transporting supplies or had been impressed for necessary labor.[157]

Such concern for local interests had long characterized Henry's legislative service even while he was busy with more important legislative matters and such personal affairs as the management of his extensive estate and occasional speculation in the provincial wheat market.[158] Even at the height of the Tappen incident Beekman took time to implore Henry Livingston to find out what legislation might be desired by his constituents and to get drafts or petitions providing all the necessary information.[159] Such advice undoubtedly underlay Henry's sponsorship of many measures, some of which applied only to Dutchess County, for such purposes as the elimination of wolves, the prevention of forest fires, the preservation of deer, the care of the poor, the construction of a county court house, and particularly the extension of roads.[160]

There were also subjects of provincial legislation in which Henry had a local interest to defend. He resisted the drive by New York merchants to protect the reputation of New York's export flour by requiring that it be inspected in New York,[161]

[156] *Ibid.*, 460, 492.

[157] *Ibid.*, 471, 574, 474, 537.

[158] On Beekman's wheat speculations, see Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, February 19, 1751; December [*sic*], 1751; January 17, February 17, May 6, 1752; January 30, 1753; *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, March 13, 1752.

[159] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, September 11, 1750. See also the letter of October 23, 1751, in which Henry reminds Livingston of his having expressed intention to send along such drafts or petitions for acts "Benneficiall for the county."

[160] *Assembly Journal*, I, 787 (wolves), 788 (fires), II, 282 (deer), 6, 11, 237, 294 (poor), 5, 6, 11, 70, 73, 86, 282, 290, 355 (court house), I, 720, II, 21, 290, 346 (roads).

[161] McAnear, 696.

a device which would have encouraged farmers to have their wheat milled in New York rather than in Dutchess in order to save the expense of opening and reclosing the barrels. Henry was the owner of at least one mill in Dutchess County.[162]

Henry also resisted the efforts of New York City lawyers to restrict the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace and thereby promote business for themselves while also improving and formalizing administration of justice. Henry had co-authored a bill on the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace in 1737 and apparently helped also to frame a measure of 1754 which increased from £2 to £5 the value of judgments which could be sought in such courts. When that act came up for renewal the Council, prompted by a petition signed by the leading lawyers of the Province, apparently tacked on amendments which not only restricted the jurisdiction but also reduced the convenience of these poor man's courts. Henry objected, but the Assembly ultimately gave in and accepted the Council amendments.[163]

Consideration of legislation for the distribution of the provincial tax burden also afforded Henry the opportunity to serve his constituents. Usually the Assembly decided to raise a fixed sum of money and then allocated to each of the counties the responsibility for raising by means of a tax on property a certain share of the total. Henry had little reason to find fault with the quotas set for Dutchess in this manner until 1755. Prior to that time Dutchess had usually paid about four per cent of the provincial total. By then, however, its population had grown to more than 13,000, roughly sixteen per cent of the Colony's total. Thus, although he voted against its quota allocations, Henry could not have been too unhappy with the defense levy of 1755 which increased the burden upon Dutchess County to a little more than seven per cent of the total.[164] Like most other Assemblymen he seemed to prefer those taxes which

[162] Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, February 19, 1751.

[163] *Assembly Journal*, I, 698; II, 407, 546, 553, 578.

[164] *Ibid.*, II, 435–36; *Colonial Laws*, IV, 61. On the population figures, see J. Smith, 61; on the tax quotas, see Charles Worthen Spencer, "Sectional Aspects of New York Provincial Politics," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXX (1915), 397–424.

bore more heavily on the commercial wealth of New York City than upon country products.[165]

But neither Henry's services to his constituents nor his uninterrupted tenure in the Assembly from 1724 to 1758 had quelled all opposition within Dutchess County. His letters reveal the existence of discontent among his tenants[166]; the powerful landowning families of Chambers and Philipse had captured one Assembly seat before the rise of Colden's group forced them to ally themselves with Beekman. The goals of Beekman's tenants are not apparent but the motives of the great landowners are hardly less obscure. Even the group which Colden sponsored appears to have had no clear political program and the reasons for its opposition to Beekman remain uncertain. The leaders, Martin Hoffman, Theodorus Van Wyck, John Brinkerhoff, and the Reverend Chauncey Graham, seem to have represented a rising middle class of freeholders which disliked the domination of the landed aristocracy and so allied itself with the British authorities on the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Probably their principal interests were local rather than provincial in nature.

Henry staved off the rise of this group for as long as he chose to remain in the Assembly and at his retirement he was able to transmit the two seats for Dutchess County to his nephew, Henry Livingston, and his son-in-law, Robert R. Livingston. Henry Livingston, as we have seen, had served for years as Beekman's political lieutenant and as county clerk. Robert, a lawyer widely respected for his "good Sense" and later a revolutionary leader, was a grandson of the first lord of Livingston Manor. He had grown up at "Clermont," his father's 13,000-acre estate which was just a short distance up the Hudson from Beekman's home at Rhinebeck. When in 1742 he married Margaret Beekman, Henry's only surviving child, he made himself heir to one of the Colony's largest landed estates and to Henry's seat in the Assembly which he held for

[165] *Assembly Journal*, I, 745; II, 36–37.

[166] *Yearbook*, to Henry Livingston, December 19, 1751; Henry Beekman Mss., to Henry Livingston, August 16, 1749, August 31, 1749, December 29, 1750, March 20, 1751, March 13, 1752.

ten years before being vanquished by Beekman's long-time foes.

Confident that his economic and political affairs were in the best of hands, Henry Beekman retired from the Assembly in 1758. Although he had already lived his three score years and ten, he continued to enjoy the leisure of retirement at his home in Rhinebeck for nearly another score of years. When he died there on January 3, 1776, the Revolution for which he had helped to lay the groundwork was at last in progress.

Indeed the political battles in which Henry Beekman engaged had already consummated a democratic revolution of considerable significance. In fighting prosecution by information, inequitable practices in impaneling juries, exercise of chancery powers by the Governor without authorization by the Assembly, interference by the executive in the adjudication of court cases, the establishment of court fees without Assembly approval, Beekman had helped materially to develop a judiciary free of executive domination. In the struggle for detailed control over the expenditure of provincial revenues he had helped to make possible an even more remarkable revolution which transferred control of much of the provincial government from agents of the British crown to elected representatives of the people of New York. The further evolution of the American republic was assisted not only by Henry's son-in-law Judge Robert R. Livingston, but also by two outstanding grandsons, "Chancellor" Robert R. Livingston, negotiator of the Louisiana purchase, and Edward Livingston, Secretary of State under Jackson and author of the famous Louisiana penal code.[167]

[167] See the *Dictionary of American Biography* articles on the two Robert R. Livingstons and Edward. Other grandchildren of Henry Beekman were wives of General Richard Montgomery, Reverend Freeborn Garrettson, Governor Morgan Lewis, and Secretary of War John Armstrong.

THE MERCHANTS

Gerard G. Beekman (1719-1797)

Commission Agent

6

THE MAN AND HIS BUSINESS

A General View

FROM THE beginning of the seventeenth century until the middle of the eighteenth, at least one member of every Beekman generation devoted a major portion of his adult life to political activity. In the course of the eighteenth century, business for the first time replaced politics as the central interest of the leading members of the family. Political interests died hard, as the career of James Beekman demonstrates, but so, too, had business interests been difficult to submerge even in the century and a half of political preoccupation. Let us therefore review briefly the economic interests of the family in those earlier generations before commencing a general survey of the commercial career of Gerard G. Beekman.[1]

Gerardus Beekman, a Protestant leader at Catholic-controlled Cologne, was almost certainly in business there until Spanish forces in 1612 destroyed the fortress which he and other Protestant leaders had been building at nearby Mulheim.[2] Then

[1] The "G" in Gerard G. Beekman is explained in Gerard's letter to Henry Lloyd of Boston, May 17, 1756. It is, he wrote, "Only to distinguish my Name from [those of] several Cozins I have of the Same Name . . . they all do the Same by Placing the first Letter of their fathers Names between their Christen and Surname." The "G" thus meant only "son of Gerard." Unfortunately this simple rule was never consistently applied by newspapermen and public record keepers, or, if it was, then there must have existed a large reservoir of Gerard and Gerardus Beekmans in addition to the "several" cousins bound by the rule. The confusion was not diminished by the zeal of members of that generation in bestowing the name upon their offspring, nor by the invention of at least one non-existent "Gerardus" by a genealogist (Aitken, 124 *ff*; The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society's *Collections* record no baptism for such a child).

[2] See Chapter I.

Gerardus fled northward and entered government service under the Protestant House of Brandenburg.

Henry Beekman, son of Gerardus, owned two mills in the predominantly Catholic duchy of Berg. One manufactured gun powder, but the nature of the other is unknown. Henry abandoned both these interests when in 1619 his Protestant convictions induced him to move to The Netherlands. There in the final phase of the Dutch war for independence from the Spanish he put his business experience to good use by becoming superintendent of a powder magazine.

With William Beekman, son of Henry, there is more evidence of mercantile activities. In 1649, two years after he emigrated to New Amsterdam with the party of Peter Stuyvesant, the new Director-General of New Netherland, young William Beekman (then 26) identified himself in a legal document as "merchant."[3] Within a few years, however, Williams accepted an important position with the governing West India Company. His duties included the enforcement of commercial regulations and no doubt gave him valuable experience, but they also kept him away from the commercial center on Manhattan Island.[4] When at last he returned to New York in 1670 as a private citizen, William purchased a house, a brewhouse, and two mills along the East River near the present Beekman Street. He used beer to pay his taxes in 1672 and was referred to publicly as "brewer." Later it became clear that William was also a shipowner who engaged in trade and privateering in the Caribbean area. Politically, too, William Beekman was identified with the New York City merchants and, although his estate was modest in comparison with those of some of his associates, there were probably no more than a handful of New Yorkers wealthier than he at the close of his career.[5]

William's son, Gerardus Beekman, was a doctor, politician

[3] Edmund B. O'Callaghan (ed.), *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State*, Part I, *Dutch Manuscripts, 1630–1644* (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1865), 49.

[4] See Chapter II.

[5] Victor H. Paltsits (ed.), *Minutes of the Executive Council of the Province of New York, Administration of Francis Lovelace, 1668–1673* (Albany: State of New York, 1910), I, 250; *Doc Rel*, II, 699–700; *Ecc Rec*, II, 633 *ff*.

and landholder. Yet there is reason to believe that he also engaged in business. He manifested a long-continued interest, as had his father before him, in acquiring title from the City to the lands between high and low water mark adjacent to the Beekman brewhouse and mills to which a slaughterhouse was added in his lifetime. In the year before his death (1722) the wharf at "Beekman Slip" at last came into being. It was built and apparently maintained by Gerardus as a public slip in exchange for a grant to him by the City of title to the land between high and low water marks.[6]

In addition to this interest in maritime activities a mercantile career is suggested by the wide geographical distribution found among the debtors of Gerardus. Among these debtors were residents of Kings County, Queens County, Staten Island, Rye, the New Jersey counties of Essex and Somerset, and even of Philadelphia. This seems much more likely to indicate wholesale mercantile activities than medical practice, although Gerardus is often identified as "dockter" in these papers and the origin of the obligation is never mentioned.[7]

The many children of Gerardus Beekman included William (1685–1770), the father of James, and Gerard (1693–1746), the father of Gerard G. Beekman. The life of Dr. William Beekman, as he was later known, will be discussed in a later chapter. Unfortunately little information about his brother Gerard has survived except for a few genealogical facts. These indicate that Gerard's first wife was Anna Maria Van Horne. She bore two daughters and two sons, Gerard G. and a younger brother, Cornelius. After her death Gerard married Catharine Provoost. By her there were six more children, including William, who was to move to Liverpool about 1748 with his widowed mother, and David, who in the 1760's established himself in business at the Danish island of St.

[6] See the many references in Stokes' *Iconography* as cited in the index under "Beekman Slip." These draw heavily on the *Minutes of the Common Council* in which many references are to be found indexed under "Beekman, Gerardus." Copies of deeds for some of the properties in the area are to be found among the Beekman Family Papers, Box 31.

[7] Beekman Family Papers, Boxes 17 and 22. He was listed as "Chirurgeon" also when he became a freeman of New York City in 1715 (NYHS, *Collections 1885*, 94).

Croix in the West Indies.[8] Because all his sons became merchants and both his wives came from mercantile families it is almost certain that Gerard himself also engaged in trade. He was in all probability the Gerard Beekman who was identified as "Merchant" when he became a freeman of New York City in 1725 and to whom John Berrians became a mercantile apprentice in 1724.[9]

The extent of Gerard Beekman's wealth is impossible to determine with any accuracy, but there are indications that it was not inconsiderable. His will[10] provided, for instance, that there should be returned to his widow her dowry of £400. This was only half the amount provided by Gerard's brother, Dr. William Beekman, for his daughter Cornelia, when she married William Walton,[11] but it was £100 more than the annual income Gerard G. thought was required to live "Like a Gentleman" in New York in 1764.[12] By providing simply that his estate be divided equally among his children Gerard's will unfortunately avoids any other indication of the extent of his property. His wife's will[13] is no more explicit; it provides similarly that her property be divided among *her* children. However, two houses belonging to this estate sold in 1763 for £2,500.[14] Thus upon these imperfect evidences one can conclude no more than that Gerard, the father of Gerard G. Beekman, should probably be listed among New York's wealthy merchants rather than among the very wealthy.

The facts of Gerard G. Beekman's life, other than those mentioned in his letterbooks, are almost as deeply obscured as in the case of his father. Born in 1719, Gerard G. Beekman was the oldest son among his father's ten or more children, an accident which won him the munificent sum of 10/ by his father's will in addition to his equal share with the other children. His

[8] Aitken, 124 *ff*. This work omits Cornelius, however, and adds to the family a non-existent Gerardus G. (see note 1). More reliable are scattered references in Gerard's letterbook and NY G & B, *Collections*, III, 25, 41, 56, 71, 85.

[9] NYHS *Collections 1885*, p. 106.

[10] NYHS *Collections 1895*, p. 89.

[11] Beekman Family Papers, Box 35. Folder 1.

[12] Gerard G. Beekman letterbook, to William Beekman, January 30, 1764.

[13] NYHS *Collections 1897*, 257–8.

[14] Gerard G. Beekman letterbook, to William Beekman, October 13, 1763.

own mother had died before Gerard entered adolescence; consequently he passed those years in a home presided over by his stepmother whose time was no doubt taken up in large measure by the demands of the six children whom she herself bore to his father. That the relationship between son and stepmother was not particularly close is suggested by the fact that Gerard invariably referred to her as "your mother" when he wrote in later years to his half brother, William, with whom she lived in Liverpool. He did not share in the distribution of her estate. It is noteworthy, too, that Gerard's letterbook nowhere makes reference to his father although the earliest letters in the book are dated some months before the proving of his father's will.

In contrast to this seemingly distant attitude toward his stepmother and less clearly toward his father, Gerard was quite close to his brother Cornelius and also to his half brothers and half sisters. Cornelius conducted Gerard's affairs, even to the handling of his correspondence, on at least one occasion when Gerard was absent from the city for a period of two months and Gerard warmly rebuked their half brother William for impugning Cornelius's integrity.[15] He closely attended his brother during the latter's last illness in the winter of 1754–55[16] and was also executor of his estate.[17]

Gerard's relationship with his half brothers and sisters was not as intimate as this, but clearly he was most friendly to them. When William was attempting to establish a business at Liverpool Gerard laboriously corrected his spelling at William's request, and informed him of some letter-writing niceties which William had neglected.[18] At other times Gerard extended and embarrassed himself in trying to collect debts due William, represented him in the settlement of his mother's estate, advanced him money at some sacrifice, and profferred needed advice.[19] David Beekman, younger than William, seemed to

[15] William Beekman, June 6, 1752. Citations to the Gerard G. letterbook hereafter will mention, as in this instance, only the addressee and the date of the letter.

[16] Fowler, December 13, 1754.

[17] *New York Gazette and Weekly Post Boy*, March 17, 1755.

[18] William Beekman, June 6, 1752.

[19] William Beekman, *passim*.

require less assistance, but Gerard also advised and aided him, especially after he moved to St. Croix.[20] It was Gerard, too, who announced to William the engagement of "our Effie," younger sister of William and David, to "a pretty Youth of 21 Years and about £8,000."[21] Clearly Gerard was quite close to these members of his family.

Toward the family of his uncle, Dr. William Beekman, Gerard displayed the same curious detachment evident in the case of his father and stepmother. He had occasional business dealings with his uncle, most notably on a disastrous African venture, and also with his cousin and namesake, Gerard W. Beekman, but one looks in vain for indications that Gerard regarded them as in any way different from other casual business associates. Once, indeed, Gerard expressed reluctance to do business with his cousin; he blamed it on the latter's being "very Exact in his [demand for] payments and doubtfull of Crediting."[22] At another time Gerard declined to press an affair for William against David and their brother-in-law, Abraham Lynsen, because he did not wish to be "at Loggerheads" with those two, "the only Relation I have here and Live in friendship with."[23]

If, indeed, Gerard had so little assistance from his own parents and from his more wealthy relatives, it is difficult to understand how he launched himself in business. Unfortunately his letters contribute little to enlighten us on that score. His only reference to early training appears in the context of an argument over practices in the chinaware trade. This, said Gerard, was a trade with which he had great familiarity, not only because of his own importations, but also because of those of "the Gentleman I Served my time with."[24] An apprenticeship, such as this remark implies Gerard had taken, was quite common for children of wealthy mercantile families, but again, as far as the letterbooks indicate, the severance of the relationship must have been early and complete. Gerard never mentioned it again.

[20] David Beekman, *passim*.
[21] William Beekman, January 30, 1764.
[22] Fowler, June 28, 1763.
[23] William, July 3, 1764.
[24] Gilbert, October 22, 1750.

As much a mystery as the source of Gerard's training is the source of his capital. Clearly when his first letterbook began in 1746 the young merchant of twenty-seven was adequately stocked with capital as well as with experience and contacts. Probably, as was customary,[25] Gerard received some capital from his father at the time he set up in business; his stock was augmented about the time his letterbook began by his share of his father's estate. A third but limited source of funds was Gerard's activity as a commission agent. This form of business, with its avoidance of the need for investment of one's own capital, was admirably suited to the needs of an impecunious but aspiring young merchant. It is possible, too, that Gerard received some capital from his mother's family, for his relations with the Van Hornes in the early years of his business were very close.[26]

Reenforcing these ties to the Van Horne family was Gerard's marriage to Anna Van Horne in 1745.[27] The union ended tragically, however, for Anna died just one year after their marriage, shortly after the birth of their son.[28] Her death the youthful widower described as "one of the greatest Losses man Can be Sincable of . . . a Loving good Tempered wife a dear friend and Good Companion." He consoled himself with deeply religious thoughts and concluded sadly that she had left a "Troublsom world whare I find no True happiness is to be had."[29] Gerard never remarried.

The son, so early orphaned, was inescapably named Gerard. His father's letterbook makes frequent mention of "Garry" and a sloop, the *Little Garry*, in which Gerard invested was probably named for him.[30] Inevitably young Gerard's identity becomes confused with that of the small army of relatives bearing the same name, but he may have been the owner of that name who graduated from King's College in 1766,[31] his twen-

[25] Compare, for example, Dr. William Beekman's assistance to his sons as described in Chapter X.

[26] See Snell, November 25, 1747, and July 5, 1749. See also the daybook, *passim*.

[27] Aitken, 133; NY G & B, *Collections*, I, 174.

[28] NY G & B, *Collections*, III, 127.

[29] Channing, October 25, 1746.

[30] See the Daybook, 335–6, for the accounts of the *Little Garry*.

[31] *Columbia University Alumni Register, 1754–1931* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 989.

tieth year. He may also have been the Lieutenant Gerardus Beekman of the New York militia who voted on January 31, 1776, in the poll of an almost equally split battalion in favor of serving the Revolutionary government.[32] Certainly, he was the one who had married Cornelia Van Cortlandt, daughter of the man who was to be that government's first Lieutenant-Governor.[33] Certainly also this was the Gerard Beekman who received £1,000 by the will of his uncle, Samuel Van Horne in 1771[34] and who after the war purchased 750 acres of the confiscated Philipse estate at Tarrytown where he lived until his death in 1822.[35]

Happy as Gerard undoubtedly was with "little Garry," there is no doubt that the chief joy of his life was hunting. Like many another businessman of a later generation Gerard abstained from such pleasures in his early years, preferring to devote his energies to trade. By 1761, however, fortyish and prosperous from the now subsiding business boom occasioned by the French and Indian War, Gerard applied himself with enthusiasm to the recreation which he had previously denied himself. "Glorious sport," he wrote to William of his "Plovering on Long Island" where he boasted of having shot ninety-seven birds in a week, including fifteen brace in one morning "from my Carrage."[36] Soon he committed to his letterbook a copy of the minute instructions which he imparted to a ship captain for the purchase of the proper powder and shot and a "Genteel fowling Peice" in London.[37] Two years later he exclaimed that he had shot during the summer "upward [of] 300 Pidgions and 233 Plovers . . . now for Sqirels."[38] Next summer he and a

[32] *Doc. Rel.*, XV, 51.

[33] Aitken, p. 133; Francis M. Marvin, *The Van Horn Family History* (1929), 114.

[34] NYHS, *Collections 1904*, 305.

[35] Edgar M. Bacon, *Chronicles of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow* (2nd ed.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 137: Dr. Hugh Grant Rowell, "Philipse Castle, 1683–1944," *American Collector*, XIII (May, 1944), 5–6; Harry B. Yoshpe, *The Disposition of Loyalist Estates in the Southern District of the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 59, 140. Yoshpe shows (pp. 58–59) that Cornelius P. Low bought the manor house, but the others indicate that it was in the Beekman purchase. In any case Beekman and his wife seem to have acquired possession of the house about the time of the purchases. One wing of the "Castle" is said to have been constructed by them.

[36] William Beekman, August 18, 1761.

[37] Davis, November 30, 1761.

[38] William Beekman, October 13, 1763.

friend came home from Hempstead "After great Pleasure and success" with 116 fine plovers[39] despite Gerard's "great dis-Apointment" in not having received another gun which he had ordered from London.[40] In 1766 he looked forward to his plover-hunting as a temporary escape from the anxieties produced by the Stamp Act crisis,[41] but he frustrated himself in some degree by having his mail forwarded to Hempstead.[42] A true devotee of the sport, Gerard continually ordered his shot from London and complained when that received was not the best.[43]

If Gerard was particular about his shot, he was fastidious about his clothing. He frankly confessed that he was "somewhat Particular in my wearing Apparel."[44] As early as 1749 Gerard ordered stockings, breeches, coats, and a "Drake blue Cloak" from England. It is perhaps significant that in the stocking order his use of the superlative applied to size rather than to quality[45] and that the order for "Two Suits" specified that each should have "Two pair of Breeches." Furthermore, Gerard insisted that spare pieces be sent for mending "in case of misfortune" and that the seams of his coats and breeches be made so that they could be "Lett out and made Larger" in case of his "growing Lustyer." The suit he sent in lieu of measurements (not trusting New York tailors) he wished to have returned.[46]

By 1755, when the French and Indian War was already informally in progress, Gerard could afford to concentrate less on the economies and more on the quality. This time he wanted "best Silk" instead of merely "fine . . . white Linnin" stockings. Under military influence he ordered "a good fashonable Shass [sash] as is wore by your Officers," and "a fashonable Silver Mounted Sword . . . with a sword knot." He was willing to pay five guineas apiece for sash and sword.[47]

[39] Townsend, August 20, 1764.
[40] Davis, June 1, 1764.
[41] Sharpe, July 30, 1766.
[42] Gibbs, August 26, 1766.
[43] Davis, October 10, 1764; Raminger, October 10, 1764; Sharpe, December 4, 1766.
[44] Barclay, February 26, 1759.
[45] Snell, June 3, 1749.
[46] Doughty, December 18, 1749.
[47] Edmonds, July 7, 1755. See also November 3, 1755.

In subsequent years Gerard's orders were limited to stockings, but he became more and more insistent that they must be the best without regard to price.[48] "I have sent Severall times for the best," he wrote Captain Davis in 1764, "but have Come damd bad."[49] That Davis failed also to satisfy Gerard's taste is clear from a later letter to Richard Sharpe, Gerard's best friend, who was visiting London in 1766. "I dont Like to Complain," he wrote repeating his specifications, but the stockings "Our friend Davis sent . . . are nothing."[50] Surely Gerard went to his grave with his craving for fine stockings still unsatisfied.

The vogue of homespun dress, a patriotic American protest against British legislation, had perhaps helped to channel Gerard's extravagant tastes into the stocking market, but he found another socially acceptable outlet, too. Learning that Rhode Island homespun was particularly good, Gerard wrote to two correspondents in that colony asking each of them to do what they could for him. To one he sent a sample of Rhode Island imitation Wilton and asked to be sent some like it "or better if you can."[51] From his other correspondent he asked only something in homespun "that Strikes your fancey."[52]

To his passion for hunting and his fondness for fine dress Gerard added a taste for good wine and the pleasures of conviviality. When his friend Richard Sharpe shipped out on a business trip to an undisclosed port Gerard sent him twelve bottles "of my Anno Domini," an eighteenth century euphemism for very old wine. The night before he had taken six bottles of the same wine to the "Consort roome," apparently a sort of gentlemen's club, where, with the songs of "Mr. Perry" and the "Musick . . . Performed with [by?] Doctors Shug and farquer," it "Cheared our hearts."[53]

That he might further indulge his evident bent for hospitality in the leisure time which he could by then afford Gerard in 1759 ordered six pipes of "the Very best London Wines" from three different firms in Madeira. He wished to see which

[48] Barclay, November 23, 1758; Davis, January 30, 1760.
[49] Davis, June 1, 1764.
[50] Sharpe, December 22, 1766.
[51] Malbone, November 28, 1765.
[52] Fowler, August 20, 1764.
[53] Sharpe, February 6, 1752.

"ships the best wines."[54] As one might have expected the "Very best London Wines" from Madeira pleased Gerard little better[55] than did the "best" silk stockings or patent shot from London, but in this instance at least he was merely reflecting the contemporary spirit of New York. "Our people," he wrote in 1763, with reference to tastes in wine, "Especially those that Can aford it are become very Luxurious and none but the best will goe down with us." He was proud that he could have obtained £90 per pipe for the five pipes of Madeira he had then on hand for his own use, although he could not get £55 for some excellent wine sent him for sale by a friend in Rhode Island. "Such differences," he said, "our Connesseurs makes in Madera wine."[56] His orders and complaints to Madeira continued into 1764; their cessation in that year invites the suggestion that the cause may have been related to the enactment by Parliament of a special duty on Madeira wines imported at colonial ports.[57]

With or without Madeira, however, Gerard continued to enjoy playing host. Bothered by a long illness in 1767, Gerard complained to his brother David that he had not been able "to Entertain Mr. Kortright and the Ladies so Often As I Could Chuse or Should have done if had Enjoyed health."[58] Nearly thirty years later it could be said of him in his obituary that his "hospitality and good old wine endeared him to many friends."[59]

Convivial, fancy-dressing, sports-loving Gerard was also given on occasion to the use of somewhat earthy language. In contrast to the extreme piety of his remarks on the occasion of his wife's death, Gerard's letterbook is sprinkled with his own orthographic versions of varying forms of "damn" and at the age of 45 he complained of his luck in a business affair by denouncing "the old whore Mother fortune bestowing her daugh-

[54] Barclay and each of three Madeira firms, January 15, 1759.

[55] Searle, March 25, 1760.

[56] Malbone, May 23, 1763.

[57] For a recent discussion of this legislation see Edmund S. and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 24–29.

[58] David Beekman, May 9, 1767.

[59] *New York Journal*, September 5, 1796.

ter on me in my Old Days."[60] A more serious affront to twentieth-century mores was his facetious advice to his half brother David in the West Indies that the only way to be sure of making a fortune was by "disposing of your Pintly [penis] to some Clever Girl and Letting her have the use of it for a good Sugar Plantation."[61]

Gerard was a proud man, too. He bristled defensively at the suggestion of a London correspondent that a regular dry goods merchant at New York might be better able than he to dispose of some slow-moving cloth items.[62] When he unwisely bought some very poor-quality rum Gerard wrote that "I had like to Have Suffered much In my Caracter here for Selling some of that Rum for what I bought it for, but," he added, his reputation "Convinced the purchaser and others of my Innocence."[63] That his pride did not extend so far as to allow him to rank himself a "merchant" in 1749 Gerard made clear in a dispute with a Rhode Island correspondent. "I never prettended to be a merchant," said Gerard, "and Conciquently Cannot be capable of Observeing [and] Preforming all theire Rules and Customs."[64] Unfortunately it is not clear which "Rules and Customs" of the merchants Gerard had chosen not to observe in this instance.

Whether he called himself merchant or not, Gerard did participate with other colonial men of commerce in the observance of a remarkable code of behavior. Although this code was in evidence in many aspects of Gerard's business career, it shows up nowhere more clearly than in the collection of debts. This was a subject which occupied a great deal of Gerard's letter-writing time, especially in depressed years. These letters reveal that as a matter of course Gerard would call upon his corre-

[60] Davis, June 1, 1764.

[61] David Beekman, March 8, 1766. Whether or not David followed Gerard's advice, he is reported to have become the owner of not one but three such plantations. See William E. Verplanck, *The History of Abraham Isaacse Verplanck* (Fishkill: John W. Spaight, 1892), 181–2. David was one of several at St. Croix who befriended the young orphan, Alexander Hamilton. See Broadus Mitchell, "The Secret of Alexander Hamilton" *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXIX (Autumn, 1953), 596–97.

[62] Snell, January 22, 1749.

[63] Snell, August 2, 1750.

[64] Channing, February 8, 1749.

spondents and at times on total strangers to act for him in the collection of debts at distant places. To cite an extreme example, when he was victimized by a confidence man in 1754 Gerard mobilized merchants in Philadelphia, Jamaica, and England to help apprehend the criminal and to minimize the loss.[65] All things considered, the mercantile community operated with considerable effect in this instance. Of course Gerard also acted for his friends and relatives in debt-collections at New York, although in the 1760's he complained to his brother William who tended to abuse his complaisance that it was "an Unthankfull office for a Man in trade to accept of Powers of attorney against Others" and that "A man In business Cant at all times Charge his Memory with a few Persons in Debt to Others and bring Enquiry after them Every day."[66] Gerard preferred to have the onus of prosecution borne by lawyers retained by his brother, although he agreed to "advise with them."[67]

Much of Gerard's trouble regarding debt-collection concerned Connecticut men and these experiences formed the basis for a deep-seated prejudice on his part against any one from that Colony. "New England men are bad pay," he wrote early in 1754,[68] and by the end of the year he had concluded that "seven Eights of the People I have Credited in New England has proved to be d—d ungreatfull cheating fellows, that I am now almost afraid to Trust any man [in] Conniecticut though hes well recommend[ed] from Others."[69] As late as 1767 he wrote of his poor success in collecting debts in Connecticut; he could not then "see a prospect of getting anything from the best of them out of that damd Cuntry."[70] Somewhat belatedly

[65] On this episode see letters bearing the following dates: September 4, 1754, September 30, 1754, October 6, 1754, October 21, 1754 (two letters), November 18, 1754, November 29, 1754, December 5, 1754, December 17, 1754, May 26, 1755, June 6, 1755, December 24, 1755.

[66] William Beekman, May 16, 1766.

[67] William Beekman, October 26, 1763.

[68] Fowler, April 2, 1754. See also Lewis, February 5, 1753.

[69] Johnson, December 2, 1754. Quoted also in Harrington, 122.

[70] David Beekman, May 9, 1767. See Boardman, October 28, 1754, for one incident tending to strengthen Gerard's prejudice.

he swore in 1768: "I shall never trust any more men of that Cuntry. The great Part of them turns Out bad."[71]

Gerard's other prejudices were less violent. He was fond of assuring correspondents that he had "almost Turned Jew" in his diligent efforts to dispose of their goods[72] and he complained once that the Quakers and the Jews seemed to be taking over the flaxseed trade,[73] but no name appears in his daybook with much greater frequency than that of "Hayman Levy." The only other group to incur markedly unfavorable comment, apart from the Irish "scowbankers" (see Chapter II), was that of the French factors in the Caribbean area. When John Hurd of Boston wrote of unfavorable treatment he had received at the hands of a French factor, Gerard replied that it was "not much unlike the Treatment of the french Factors in general" of which most New York ship captains complained. His own experience "Before and During the Late wars" was similar, Gerard noted, and had led him to decide that he would "not Put it in the Power of Any One of them for the Future to treat me Ill."[74]

Sharp practices were not confined, however, to men of Connecticut or French factors. Despite the gentlemanly code Gerard and his correspondents frequently stooped a little to turn or save a penny. In 1748 Gerard himself informed a Rhode Island correspondent quite proudly that he had obtained the fine wine which he sent by bribing two carmen who had picked it out for some one else.[75] A few months later he was equally happy over having bribed a customs officer to underrate the capacity, thus reducing the duty, of several casks of rum sent by another Rhode Island correspondent to be sold on commission.[76] In 1754, in order to secure freight for the vessel consigned him by an Irish correspondent, Gerard induced several friends to ship flaxseed to Ireland on their own accounts despite

[71] Ross, January 24, 1768.

[72] Bowler, February 14, 1760, and Clifford, December 7, 1761.

[73] Fowler, December 7, 1761.

[74] Hurd, May 16, 1763.

[75] Channing, March 29, 1748. Gerard's previous sentence had gallantly halved his commission rate on goods sent Channing because it had become evident the goods were for a woman.

[76] Thurston, September 23, 1748.

advice from the correspondent to avoid such a risk himself.[77] When a ship captain, in order to gain freight from Gerard, allowed him to believe quite falsely that there was no cotton already aboard his ship for Boston, Gerard evinced an understandable tolerance for the successful chicanery by commenting only that the man had "Deceived me a Little."[78] Nor did concern for the public welfare often inhibit Gerard's pursuit of profit; when flour was very scarce in New York in 1748 he sent off a shipload in great haste lest the voyage be arrested by the widespread clamor of hungry inhabitants.[79] Some suspicion attaches also to his quick action in 1754 in hiring a cartman to peddle about the town a Rhode Island correspondent's cheese which was "Spoiling with maggets."[80]

The bribery of the customs officer suggests that Gerard may have been involved occasionally, as were many of his more distinguished contemporaries, in smuggling. Indeed he was. The initial smuggling episode recorded in his letterbook seems to have involved him involuntarily. A ship captain coming in from Rhode Island brazenly failed to enter his vessel at the customs office and proceeded to unload "publickly on the Wharff." Thus he had "saved" the duty on the rum which he had on board, part of which was owned by Gerard. The captain "run a great Risque and so did we," the shipper and himself, wrote Gerard, for the captain was liable to a fine of £100 and the merchants to the seizure of their cargo.[81]

The smuggling of rum into New York continued to concern Beekman intermittently throughout the 1750's. In 1752 Gerard asked that a remittance in Rhode Island rum be sent by Captain Brown, presumably a superior smuggler, rather than by an earlier vessel which Gerard himself had hired.[82] He men-

[77] Cunningham and Schoals, October 21, 1754. Gerard had to make a small shipment himself in order to induce his friends to venture.

[78] Lloyd, November 17, 1755.

[79] Thurston, September 23, 1748, and Channing, same date.

[80] Fowler, October 15, 1754.

[81] Gilbert, September 31 [*sic*], 1750, and *Colonial Laws*, III, 96, 99. This law of 1740 remained in force throughout Gerard's career except for a brief period in 1750 (See Thurston, January 23, 1750). The duty was two pence per gallon. See Harrington, Chapter VII, for an excellent discussion of regulations on trade and the New York businessman's conduct in relation to them.

[82] Fowler, July 28, 1752. The cargo did arrive safely (Fowler, August 26, 1752).

tioned that the duty had been "saved" on some rum from Rhode Island in 1753,[83] but later that year when Townsend White inquired as to the possibilities of effecting such an economy on rum from Philadelphia, Gerard was cautious. It might be done, he wrote, "if [Captain] Clark Brings any more then yours and Enters that but Otherwise the risque is too Great for our wharffs are lined with Informers."[84] In 1755 Gerard complained of having had "to pay duties for Every Gallon" of rum in a shipment sent him as a remittance from Rhode Island.[85] His words seemed to imply, however, that this was unusual. Gerard left no indication of how rum smuggling fared during the 1760's when law enforcement was more strict.

Cocoa was another commodity which Gerard smuggled on occasion. In 1754 he wrote that apparently because of an unspecified misfortune to the vessel bearing the shipment from Rhode Island he was "obliged to pay duties for the Cocoa, for EveryBody knew it and the risque was too Great." He did succeed, however, in paying duty on less than the actual amount.[86] Twelve years later the practice was evidently still in vogue although now more difficult. "Being informed," wrote Gerard, that he would be "Obliged to Swear to the Weight at the Treasurers Office," he had charged the full duty in the account sales he returned to the Rhode Islander for whom he had sold a shipment of cocoa. He promised, however, to "inquire farther before I go there to Enter it [and] whatever I Can Save Shall Credit your account."[87] Fine lines, indeed, were drawn by this eighteenth-century merchant's code of honor.

Tea, the most famous of the commodities smuggled in colo-

[83] Fowler, January 3, 1753.

[84] White, October 1, 1753. Informers shared in the proceeds of fines and forfeitures (*Colonial Laws*, III, 99 *ff*). Compare Harper, 170, and Harrington, 275–6.

[85] Fowler, June 17, 1755.

[86] Fowler, April 2, 1754. The duty was four shillings per hundredweight; the penalties were the same as for smuggling rum (*Colonial Laws*, III, 97 *ff*).

[87] Gibbs, October 3, 1766. No later letters to Gibbs appear in the letterbook. The law provided for such attestation as an alternative to payment of duty on the weight specified by a port officer (*Colonial Laws*, III, 97). That officer apparently could not be bribed at this time as he had been before. Gerard's letter to Champlin, July 3, 1762, includes a statement similar to that which appears in the letter to Gibbs, but there is no reference to the subject in later letters to Champlin.

nial commerce, was an article in which Gerard traded little. That he smuggled the Dutch variety when he did trade in tea is strongly suggested by his correspondence. On June 21, 1756, Gerard authorized Henry Lloyd of Boston, "if You Judge any Risque of Seizure," to sell a quantity of tea which Gerard had sent earlier. Otherwise Gerard wished it to be held because in his opinion "if War or not . . . it must Rise, for by the Strictness of your and our Off[ic]ers they will soon put a Stop to the duch Trade." That this dire expectation was at most only temporarily fulfilled[88] is clearly implied, however, in Gerard's comments on the occasion of his shipping tea to Rhode Island in 1760. Having shipped some relatively expensive English tea, Gerard went to great lengths to explain that it cost "but 3d more then dutch Tea Would Now Cost and that but very Indifferent." He was sure furthermore that his customer would be pleased by this unusual departure because the tea was not only of high quality but also "will past without any Risque of Seizure." One could rate these arguments higher if he had not shipped by the same vessel, without any evidence of special precaution against seizure, larger quantities of Dutch tea consigned to correspondents of longer standing.[89] At the end of 1763 a crackdown seems to have been made effective temporarily, for in answering a Rhode Island correspondent's inquiry as to the price of tea in New York Gerard quoted the figure for English tea only and asserted flatly that "dutch Cant be sent you."[90]

Still another commodity which Gerard smuggled was tobacco. Legally no colonial tobacco could be shipped anywhere but to England or to another British colony. Any ship clearing from an English colony with tobacco aboard was required to pay duty and post a bond that the tobacco would be landed in accordance with this law. Upon posting of the bond a certificate was provided which protected the tobacco from seizure in

[88] See Harrington, Chapter VII, on the variations in the vigor of anti-smuggling activity.

[89] Green, July 14, 1760; Townsend, July 14, 1760. It is possible, although unlikely, that the Dutch tea was from prize cargoes and hence legitimate.

[90] Fowler, December 5, 1763. Tea smuggling resumed on a large scale later (see Harrington, 344).

transit. Another certificate had to be obtained from the officials at the port of destination in order to cancel the bond. Because world markets were good and duties, both the colonial export duty and the import duty in England, were high, smuggling could be profitable if these ingenious laws could be evaded.[91]

Although Gerard's interest in tobacco was slight and his letters do not reveal how these regulations were violated, they make it very clear that the procedure was routine. "I am afraid I shall this day have 120£ Value of Tobaco seazed up the Sound," he wrote in 1753, "as our Officers is Gone in Persuit of it." More eloquent as to his attitude was his laconic comment: "Too much to Lose these dull times."[92] That Rhode Island customs officers, generally more cooperative than New York's, participated in perpetrating violations of the law is strongly suggested by later letters. "A friend of mine Expects 60 hhds. Virginia Tobaco," Gerard wrote to Samuel Fowler in Rhode Island; "he Desires you will Let him know if you Can have it Safely Entered and Cleared out from your place to this without Any Risque to have it Seized and what the Cost will be on Each hundred Weight Including your Commissions."[93] Furthermore, Gerard in 1754 ordered Connecticut tobacco sent to Fowler in Rhode Island in order to "have it Entered and Cleared as You have Virginia Tobaco and in the Cheepest manner for my account and ship it for this place that I may at Any time Ship it Off and have Certificate that duty is paid."[94] Later Gerard mentioned among the acceptable forms of remittance to him from Rhode Island "seven or Eight Thousand weight of good Inspected Cowpen Tobaco" if within a specified price range and "if Can be Cleared."[95] Such statements as these make sense only on the assumption that arrangements could be made in Rhode Island to remedy at lesser expense the failure to pay the colonial export duty and to secure certificates

[91] See Harper, 164 *ff*, for full discussion of these complicated regulations.

[92] White, August 20, 1753.

[93] Fowler, September 25, 1753. See also Harrington, 263–4.

[94] Fowler, April 2, 1754. See Fowler, July 8, 1754, for evidence that the plan was successfully carried out.

[95] Fowler, June 17, 1755. See Hedges, Chapter II, *passim*, for an account of illegal dealings in tobacco.

attesting either that a proper bond had been posted or that a bond posted in another colony could be voided because of compliance with the specified obligation.

The lure of various forms of illegal trade in the West Indies also proved difficult for Gerard to resist. Virtually all New York merchants at one time or another yielded to this temptation which was especially strong in wartime when inflated prices made the nationality of enemy merchants difficult to recognize. Gerard's ventures in this trade are fully considered in Chapter III.

Gerard's numerous violations of law suggest that he did not identify himself closely with his government. Like many of his contemporaries in America Gerard referred to Great Britain as "home,"[96] while he demonstrated in other ways that the identification was breaking down. When he wrote to London for a sash in 1755 Gerard wanted one such as those worn by "your" officers.[97] During the war he complained to an Irish friend that it was "a Great hardship on us Traders in america to be subject to so severe a Penalty for Shiping Provission to a nutral port when the Merchants in England and Ireland are suffered to do it at Descresiton [discretion] and have proper Clearance from the Customs for their protection."[98] He could not look favorably either upon the vigor of the law enforcement program of the British which "ruined" the sugar trade and impaired that with Madeira.[99] "I dont think It would be much Worse for North America," he wrote in 1764, "if it was Never Conquered from the Enemey, then it is at present and Like to be. The floating Custom Houses Not Only Destress us in Our Trade but go so far as Even to Empress Our Markit men and fishermen and the Laws Latly made In London will Compleat Our Ruin, the Effects of which will be soon felt by the Merchants in England for we shall be Rendered unable to pay Our debts and the Loss in the End will Center with the manufactories at Home. After a glorious and successfull War, it appears to me as if the British nation are going to destruction."[100]

[96] Fowler, July 10, 1755.
[97] Edmonds, July 7, 1755.
[98] Stewart, August 20, 1761.
[99] Townsend, May 6, 1762; Searl, February 13, 1764.
[100] William Beekman, July 3, 1764.

Subsequent events, of course, drove Gerard even farther from full identification with Britain. He was confident that the Stamp Act, if enforced, would be "the utter Ruin of North America."[101] After the repeal he was as sure that it would "be some time before we Can Possibly Retreave OurSelves from the distress this Cursed Stamp Act and Restrictions on trade has brought us."[102] Despite the difficulty it created for him in selling linens sent him from Ireland, Gerard indicated no displeasure that America's economic warfare against Britain had lessened the demand for that product. "Numbers of Person[s] in this and other Citys are now Clothed Chiefly in our own manufactures," he wrote, "and some Others Intirely without One Thread of Brittish."[103] Furthermore with reference to the ban on colonial issues of legal-tender currency, Gerard observed that "unless a Large Sum of money is Struck in this and the neighbouring Governmentt we shall never get in Our Debts."[104]

On the other hand Gerard was apprehensive over the course of events within the Colony. His most frequent complaint against the Stamp Act was that it had caused the courts to be closed, or as he expressed it, "has put an End to All Law with us." Consequently it had become impossible for him to "comple [compel] . . . payment" even of interest due him.[105] Some time after news of the repeal of the Stamp Act had been received Gerard felt that "We Still Remain in the State of Anarchy" and after several months when there were still "Tumults in the Cuntry"[106] he confided to his friend Sharpe that he "feared the Consiquences."[107]

The dread of such "Tumult" undoubtedly helped to induce an aging Gerard to remain within the British lines during the Revolution despite the fact that his son was a patriot.[108] It

[101] Ogilby, February 12, 1766.

[102] Ross, May 2, 1766.

[103] Ross, May 2, 1766.

[104] David Beekman, June 17, 1766.

[105] Ross, February 10, 1766. See also Ross, January 14, 1766; Chandler, February 10, 1766; Ogilby, same date.

[106] Ross, May 2, 1766.

[107] Sharpe, July 30, 1766.

[108] See the earlier section of this chapter. That Gerard remained within the British lines is testified by the record of his conveyance of property in 1780. The document identifies him as "late of the City of New York . . . but now of Flushing in Queens County" (New York City Hall of Records, *Libers of Conveyances of Real Property*, Liber 44, pp. 441 *ff*).

may explain also his signature on a document of November 28, 1776 which in contrast to the Declaration of Independence has been called the Loyalist Declaration of Dependence."[109] This memorial to the British commanders in New York contained the profession that its signers remained firmly devoted to the King and his government, but there exists at least the suspicion that many of the signers were motivated principally by the desire to win better treatment at the hands of the occupying forces than they had received in the preceding months. In any case there is no indication that Gerard hesitated at the end of the war in deciding to live out his days in plover-hunting on the plains of Long Island rather than to join the die-hard Loyalists in exile. He was, indeed, no politician, but a man of business.

The manifold business enterprises in which Gerard engaged were managed after 1750 from his store on Beekman Street, near Beekman Slip,[110] not far from the tanning yards. The more wealthy merchants, especially those in the dry goods trade such as Gerard's cousins, James and Gerard W. Beekman, had their stores and their town houses grouped around Hanover Square, farther down the island.[111] Gerard was proud, however, that his store would hold nearly 2,000 bushels of flaxseed.[112] When he sold the property in 1780 it brought the respectable price of £1,050.[113] No doubt it had served well for the activities in which he had chosen to engage.

One of the principal lines of business[114] which Gerard pursued was the exportation of flaxseed to Ireland. The manufacture of fine-quality linen, which occupied so large a place in the Irish economy, required that the flax be harvested before its seed had ripened. The resulting shortage of seed provided a most welcome market for a product frequently grown by American farmers. The trade was highly competitive, however, and

[109] See R. W. G. Vail, "The Loyalist Declaration of Dependence of November 28, 1776," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, XXXI (April, 1947), 68–71.

[110] *Minutes of the Common Council*, VII, 341–2; the conveyance cited in note 108.

[111] See Chapter XI.

[112] Lloyd, April 6, 1767.

[113] See note 108 above.

[114] Each of these enterprises is discussed in detail in the following chapters. See those chapters for references.

for this reason Gerard seldom chose to make flaxseed shipments on his own account. Instead, he preferred to act as purchasing agent for large-scale Irish buyers. So difficult was the trade even under these circumstances that Gerard always regarded its commissions as the hardest earned of any he received. On the other hand, although he abandoned after a few years his early decision to concentrate upon this enterprise, he was still participating in it to some extent in 1770, the terminal date of his last surviving letterbook.

A somewhat different market toward which Gerard directed his energies less consistently was that for indigo. This dye product of West Indian and Southern slave labor was an important item in the commerce of the North Atlantic. Gerard followed closely the market trends at various production and distribution centers and, usually in conjunction with at least one other merchant to share the risk, bought and sold as information and speculative instincts directed. This was the only commodity in addition to flaxseed for which Gerard kept in his "Daybook" a separate account.

As he dealt in flaxseed and indigo so with variations Gerard dealt on a smaller scale in an almost infinite variety of commodities.[115] From 1752 to 1757 he averaged almost one shipment per week on his own account. Such shipments in 1752 included, for example, candles to Tenerife, tallow to Boston, onions to Carolina, tobacco to Jamaica, glass to Rhode Island, coffee to Halifax, lignumvita to London. Instructions for the disposition of each shipment and of its proceeds went to a correspondent in the port city to which it was consigned or to the ship's captain or a supercargo. Correspondents who served Gerard on commission usually expected similar assistance from him for shipments of their own and so business relations multiplied in number and complexity. Markets were so precarious, however, and competition so keen in this kind of endeavor that Gerard frequently despaired of making any money in it when

[115] No separate consideration is given this aspect of Gerard's business. It is treated instead in Chapter IV which considers Gerard's dealings with particular localities.

shipping cargo on his own account. After the prosperous decade of the 1750's his attention turned increasingly to the performance of commissioned services for correspondents in other ports.

A related activity which frequently attracted portions of Gerard's capital was shipping. Ownership of a vessel such as could be built and fitted out for £500 or less was a great asset to merchants engaged in arbitrage; most who were so engaged did, in fact, at one time or another become part-owners of one or more vessels. Because wartime afforded special opportunities to the owners of ocean-going vessels, Gerard invested heavily in shipping during the two wars spanned by his letterbook. In duller times he usually found it more economical to hire a vessel when the need arose. There is no evidence that he concerned himself with investments in shipping at any time after the Peace of Paris in 1763.

During the Seven Years' War Gerard found one occupation which was much less competitive. The Colony of Rhode Island, influenced no doubt by his extensive business relations with Rhode Island merchants, employed Gerard as its agent to supply the force which it sent up the Hudson to join an intercolonial effort against the French. In employing Gerard in this manner Rhode Island followed the example set by the British government which itself employed mercantile firms with connections on both sides of the Atlantic to transmit funds and provide supplies for its troops.[116] Unlike Great Britain, however, Rhode Island customarily paid its obligations in rum and molasses. The association brought Gerard some welcome commissions, but he found at times that it was little less difficult to collect from the Rhode Island Government than from some non-governmental debtors.

Marine insurance was the only other business in which Gerard interested himself to an appreciable extent. His initial experience in this field Gerard gained by insuring his own voyages and by acting as agent for some of his correspondents in deal-

[116] See Harrington, 292 *ff*; Baxter, Chapters VII and IX, and Chapter XIII, pp. 253–55.

ing with New York underwriters. Transatlantic shippers usually sought insurance, as did Gerard himself for such trips, from English underwriters and relied on English correspondents to act as agents. Thus Gerard's services were most in demand for Caribbean voyages undertaken by his Rhode Island correspondents. He was particularly busy in this activity during wartime; in 1756–1757 he himself underwrote forty-five voyages.

Having accumulated a modest fortune by the time the Seven Years' War terminated, Gerard then became relatively indifferent to business. As early as 1763 he announced to a Rhode Island correspondent that he intended to give up business and "Retire in the Cuntry."[117] That he could afford to do this is evident from his complaint of the next year that he had been unable for six months to collect £500 out of £12,000 due him on bonds.[118] He was still in business, however, when his letter-book ended in 1770 and as late as 1774 he remained a resident of New York City.[119] By 1780, however, the resolution of 1763 had been carried into effect, for Gerard then lived at Flushing on Long Island where he remained until his death at the age of seventy-seven in 1796.[120]

[117] Townsend, July 9, 1763.

[118] Hurd, February 21, 1764.

[119] New York City Hall of Records, *Libers of Conveyances of Real Property*, Liber 207, p. 76; Liber 279, p. 221.

[120] *Ibid.*, Liber 44, p. 441 *ff*; *New York Journal*, September 5, 1796.

7

THE FLAXSEED TRADE

Business with Ireland

THE FLAXSEED trade was one which Gerard G. Beekman followed more consistently than any other throughout his entire career. Its basis was the linen industry of Ireland. Aided by the earlier immigration of expert French Huguenot weavers, Irish linen manufacture expanded with such rapidity in the third quarter of the eighteenth century that in 1771, the peak year of output prior to the American Revolution, annual production was roughly three times in volume and in value the average annual production of the 1740's.[1] Thus by historical accident Gerard's business career (1746–1770) as reflected in his letterbooks coincided with a period of unparalleled growth in this important Irish industry.

The industry's demand for seed requires a word in explanation of the linen-making process. It was at this time still a household affair. The rural weavers grew their own flax which they "pulled" at the proper time and "rotted" in dewy fields or in ponds or streams to prepare the fiber for use. The fiber was then made into yarn or cloth which the maker then marketed in town much as he would any agricultural product. The draper who made the purchase completed processing of the cloth before he resold it to a merchant while the weaver invested part of his income in imported seed with which to begin another round of production. Probably the basic reason for the

[1] George A. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Maunsel & Co., 1918), 189–207; see also Conrad Gill, *The Rise of the Irish Linen Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 16 *ff*, Appendix II.

use of imported seed was that better quality fiber was obtained by "pulling" the flax before the seed was fully ripe; however, the quality of home-grown seed was looked upon with disfavor even a hundred years later.[2]

The merchants who supplied this imported seed were, at least in many cases, the same as those who exported the finished linens.[3] Their group reputation, maintained well into the nineteenth century, was most unsavory. The weavers were afforded legal protection against some of their sharp practices in selling seed,[4] but the Americans from whom the seed was usually obtained had no such shield. Gerard, as we shall see, must often have wished they had.

The characteristic of the colonial American economy which helped make it possible for Gerard and his fellow merchants to supply this expanding Irish demand was the widespread production of "homespun." Most northern farm families grew at least a small patch of flax in order to be able to supply some part of their own need for cloth. Because they produced for their own use rather than for sale they could afford to allow their flax crop to ripen fully, thus sacrificing something in the quality of the fiber but gaining the seed. In addition to its cash value for export to Ireland the seed was also salable for the manufacture of linseed oil, another item of some importance in colonial trade. Should the farmer be unable to market his flaxseed, he found it useful as food for his stock. From these many standpoints flax was an excellent crop for the colonial farmer. So popular, indeed, was the crop that flaxseed ranked behind only wheat and corn among the agricultural exports of the northern colonies to Europe.[5]

[2] On flax culture and linen manufacture see Gill, *op. cit.*, Chapter III and Chapter VIII; O'Brien, *op. cit.*, 189–207; William Charley, *Flax and Its Products in Ireland* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1862), 152–59, *passim*; Asa Fitch, *A Historical, Topographical and Agricultural Survey of Washington County, New York*, Part IV, *Flax Culture of Washington County* (New York; 1848–49), 910–32; Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America* (London: 1770–1771), I, 255–6.

[3] Gill, *op. cit.*, 35. Gerard's experience tends to confirm this.

[4] O'Brien, *op. cit.*, 206; Charley, *op. cit.*, 27; Gill, *op. cit.*, 139. The last reference concerns the sharp practices of the drapers in purchasing.

[5] Percy W. Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620–1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1925), 134, 250; Fitch, *op. cit.*, *passim*; see also Harrington, 174–75. Because the

The seasonal pattern of the flaxseed trade was fixed by nature. The season opened with the threshing of the flax in the late summer or fall and ended with the plantings in Ireland the following spring. To meet that deadline ships had to leave New York in February; consequently the busy period of trading in New York usually began in December and reached its peak in January. Because seed frequently rose in price as the season progressed suppliers were seldom in a hurry to bring it to market in the fall.

Gerard's entry into the flaxseed trade was small in scale and most inauspicious. It came about through his uncle, Cornelius Van Horne, who was one of the leading merchants in the trade.[6] From subsequent letters it appears that Van Horne and Gerard had made a joint shipment of flaxseed to Londonderry in the season of 1746–1747. Gerard's interest was one-sixth.[7] Favorably impressed by the results of this effort, Gerard determined to ply the next season's market on his own. During the summer he inquired of his friend, Peleg Thurston, at what price 500 bushels of seed could be obtained in Rhode Island.[8] Whether he obtained them from Rhode Island or elsewhere, Gerard shipped for Newry that fall approximately 700 bushels (100 hogsheads) bearing his own mark. Seventy hogsheads were consigned to Captain Owen Hughes of the ship *Four Brothers* in which Gerard and his uncle each had an interest. Thirty of these were on the account of Gerard alone; forty were on a joint account with Captain John Aspinwall. Another forty hogsheads which bore his mark Gerard sold to the New York agent of a Newry merchant.[9] It was fortunate that he made this last transaction, for Captain Hughes and the *Four Brothers* were never heard from after they left New York. Thus Gerard lost not only his own flaxseed shipments but also his share in

---

bulk of the Irish linen output was shipped to England (Gill, *op. cit.*, 177), American exporters of flaxseed could usually arrange to receive payment by drawing bills of exchange on London. This was a great benefit to Americans who desired a convenient means of paying for imports from England.

[6] Snell, November 16, 1749.

[7] Snell, November 25, 1747; Cunningham, same date.

[8] Thurston, dated only July, 1747.

[9] Hughes, November 25, 1747; Snell, July 5, 1748. Gerard's references to the number of casks are inconsistent, but the number was between 100 and 116.

the vessel and that portion of its cargo which had been provided for the joint account of the owners.[10]

Despite this loss, Gerard expanded his operations in the following season. He gave qualified orders for purchases of seed on his own account to two correspondents in Rhode Island[11] and one in Philadelphia.[12] From his Philadelphia correspondent, John Morgan, Gerard wished 200 hogsheads; he was willing even to advance cash to be paid suppliers who would promise future delivery of seed. In the late summer Gerard put on board the sloop of Captain Bloomer 220 bushels of salt and six muskets which the Captain was to "Truck away for flaxseed" in "New England," meaning Connecticut.[13] Here also Gerard was willing to take promises of future delivery but only if written agreements with forfeiture provisions for non-performance could be concluded on the spot.[14] He wanted, too, a preliminary report so that he could prepare another such expedition if conditions warranted. Such purchases as may have been made in Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut supplemented, of course, Gerard's own buying in the New York market for which there was no occasion to make a record in his letterbook.

In the disposition of the seed acquired in this season Gerard was particularly cautious. He sold 200 hogsheads of seed to Irish buyers or their agents in New York. He sent only twenty hogsheads to Ireland on his own account. These went on another ship in which Gerard had an interest, the snow *Good Intent* which was bound for Newry under Captain Arthur Helms.[15] But like the *Four Brothers*, the *Good Intent* was lost at sea. When the ship was so long overdue as to leave no question of its fate, Gerard complained bitterly of his misfortune, for the two vessels in which he had invested were the only ones to be

[10] Snell, July 5, 1748.

[11] Thurston, October 17, 1748; Maycum, same date.

[12] Morgan, September 29, 1748.

[13] Bloomer, August 5, 1748. Gerard hoped to get two bushels of seed for one of salt which was in demand as a meat preservative for fall slaughtering. For each musket Gerard hoped to get 10 or 12 bushels of seed.

[14] See the previous chapter for indications of Gerard's opinion of the reliability of Connecticut men.

[15] Helms, February 27, 1749.

lost between New York and Ireland in their respective seasons.[16]

In the third season (1749–50) of his independent activity in the flaxseed trade Gerard began to establish himself as a purchasing agent for buyers on the other side of the Atlantic. This Gerard did by following up contacts arising from the joint venture with his uncle in the season of 1746–47. That shipment had been consigned to Archibald Cunningham of Londonderry with instructions to remit the proceeds to William Snell in London. Subsequently Gerard had ordered insurance through Snell on his share in each of the two ill-fated ships for Ireland and had intended that the proceeds of the seed shipped on his own account be forwarded to Snell. Anticipating a credit balance as a result of these shipments Gerard had ordered from Snell a variety of articles. In the course of the correspondence with Snell on these orders and the insurance on the two lost ships, Gerard let it be known that he would be happy to procure seed for Snell or any of his friends. It was this solicitation which brought Gerard his first in a twenty-year succession of orders for flaxseed to be shipped to Ireland.[17]

That Gerard's first order should come from London rather than from Ireland merits explanation. As the great distribution center of the British Empire, London not only provided the bulk of American imports from across the Atlantic, but it also attracted much of the linen produced in Ireland.[18] Snell was the London agent through whom several Irish merchants disposed of their linens. We have already seen that Snell acted as agent, too, for Gerard in making insurance as well as in ordering goods. Because communication still flowed with commerce, little of which existed between Irish and American ports, Snell's Irish employers found it expedient to send their orders for American flaxseed through him. Such dependence on London declined, of course, as Irish-American trade increased in volume.

[16] Snell, June 3, 1749, July 14, 1749.

[17] Shaw & Snell, November 25, 1747, January 7, 1748, July 5, 1748, November 1, 1748, June 3, 1749, July 5, 1749, September 23, 1749.

[18] See note 5.

The receipt of his first overseas order for flaxseed apparently encouraged Gerard to commit himself to the trade wholeheartedly. He soon announced to Snell his plans for the future. "I designe this Spring," he wrote on December 22, 1749, "to build me a Large Store on Purpose for to follow the flaxseed buisness [*sic*] and Convert the better Part of my Stock [capital] in that Comodity wether I have orders for it or not for if its Cheap and I have no Orders I can Ship it and if its in demand I need not fear Selling of it." Because many merchants had been able to fill only a fraction of their orders that season due to the shortage of seed, the crop having suffered from a combined attack by frost, drought and worms, Gerard was particularly pleased with his "Scheame to Secure a good quantity. . . . I have reserved 100 bushels Very Clean to Sell to the cuntry People for sowing seed as it will be much wanting in the spring and none Shall have it but must give me the increase of it." He would be pleased, of course, to serve any of Snell's Irish friends who might wish to order seed for the following season.[19]

Gerard's flaxseed business now assumed a pattern from which it was to vary little in fundamentals during the next twenty years. Because the pattern was complex as well as enduring it is perhaps best described by recounting the history of each of its successive stages separately.

In acquiring seed Gerard continued to rely on the sources which have already been mentioned. He bought from "cuntry people" of the New York hinterland who brought seed to the metropolis for sale or from speculators in the New York market. He sent out purchasing agents supplied with cash or commodities to be exchanged for flaxseed and when respective prices warranted he obtained seed from correspondents in Rhode Island, Philadelphia, and Boston. Changes or variations appeared, however, in each of these aspects of the business.

The "cuntry people" or those who did their selling for them seem to have become harder bargainers. Although Gerard seldom found occasion to comment on this aspect of the business in his letters, he did make quite explicit to one of his corre-

[19] Snell, June 3, 1749, November 16, 1749, December 22, 1749.

spondents in 1764 that there was "No such thing" in New York as "purchasing the Earlyist Seed to Obtain the Cheepist." Unlike the Philadelphia market where seed arrived in "Small parcells," wrote Gerard, "Ours All Come by Water Carrage in Large boat[s] from 1000 to 3000 Bushels at a time and Generally Keep up Untill beginning of December and January and if Any Quantity Comes Earlyer the Seller will not make a Price Untill the Bulk of the Seed Comes to market so that there is but Little Chance of one being Cheaper then Others."[20]

The existence of such a custom among the suppliers in 1764 suggests that Gerard's purchasing expeditions into Connecticut may have availed him little in the later years. What little evidence there is may be viewed as supporting such a conclusion. In the fall of 1750 Gerard sent out to the "East End" [of Long Island or Long Island Sound] a cargo of salt to be exchanged for flaxseed. This expedition enjoyed success up to a point. The sloop was returning with a respectable load of about 300 bushels of seed when it ran aground near New Haven. The ship was saved, but every kernel of Gerard's flaxseed floated out to sea.[21] Clearly, however, such efforts were still practicable in Gerard's opinion at this time. On the other hand, increasing difficulty is very apparent in the instructions which Gerard wrote for a Connecticut voyage only three years later. The phrasing indicates that although he would have preferred to have flaxseed taken in exchange for the "sundry goods" aboard, Gerard did not really expect the Captain to be able to obtain it. Still more suggestive is Gerard's fear of being identified as the potential purchaser. "Dont," he wrote, "Let any one know its for me."[22] Additional, although negative evidence of the breakdown of the system of purchasing expeditions lies in the absence of further mention of such endeavors in the remaining seventeen years of Gerard's participation in the trade.

Prior to the season of 1750–51 Gerard had *imported* flaxseed from correspondents in Rhode Island, but in that season his

[20] Ross, October 18, 1764.

[21] Gilbert, October 29, 1750; Ross, November 8, 1750.

[22] Boardman, July 25, 1753.

correspondence with the smaller colony concerned itself exclusively with his terms for sending rather than receiving seed. Gerard acknowledged to one of his correspondents at Newport that the Rhode Island price presented "Great Encouragement to Ship that article to your markit." However, because he had been "of late so unfortune [*sic*] in all my Undertakings I am almost Determined Not to Ship anything from this place for the future."[23] He did offer to deliver 400 bushels, dangers of the seas excepted, by November 20, if he were guaranteed 11/ per bushel or the market price at the time of delivery, whichever was higher. This offer was apparently rejected and there is no evidence that Gerard ever again found occasion to consider sending seed to Rhode Island.[24]

A fundamental change took place in Gerard's practice with reference to the ownership of the seed received from Rhode Island. Prior to 1750 he had always ordered seed sent on his own account. He seems to have continued this policy during the 1750's, although such orders were few.[25] During the 1760's, however, when he was curtailing his operations Gerard pursued the more conservative policy of receiving seed to be sold on commission for the accounts of his Rhode Island correspondents.[26]

With Philadelphia Gerard's dealings were quite different. Because of its extensive and productive hinterland, Philadelphia, like New York, was a principal center for the export of flaxseed. Irish purchasers and their agents frequently experienced difficulty in so juggling their orders as to keep prices roughly equal in the two areas. For example, Gerard reported in the fall of 1750, when seed was at about 56/ per hogshead in New York, that this would be at least 20/ "Cheaper then What is Shipt from Philadelphia."[27] Next season (1751–52)

[23] Gilbert, October 15, 1750, also October 22 and 29.

[24] However, in the fall of 1753 Gerard instructed his Rhode Island correspondent to resell at Newport, instead of sending to New York, seed which had been purchased earlier on Gerard's account (Fowler, November 5, 1753).

[25] Fowler, January 3, 1753, January 16, 1753, September 12, 1753, November 5, 1753, December 6, 1755, January 10, 1757.

[26] Fowler, January 18, 1762, November 5, 1764, October 24, 1765; Babcock, April 4, 1764. March 7, 1765; Treeby, November 14, 1767.

[27] Snell, November 8, 1750.

Philadelphia seed was cheaper. Seeking to offset the cycle, Gerard then called it to the attention of three of his correspondents with the prediction that the bulk of the Irish orders for the following year would go to Philadelphia, thus making seed cheaper in New York.[28] Only one of the correspondents so warned sent his order to Gerard the following season (1752–53) and the forecast proved fully accurate.[29]

Although on many such occasions Gerard was aware that seed was selling in Philadelphia at a lower price than it commanded in New York, his letterbook provides no indication that he ever attempted after 1750 to have seed sent him from that port on his own account.[30] Instead at such times Gerard arranged to have shipments made from Philadelphia to Ireland on his behalf. Conversely Philadelphia merchants commissioned Gerard to make shipments to Ireland for them when the New York price was lower than that at the Pennsylvania metropolis.[31]

In the season of 1753–54 Gerard began to exchange information with a resident correspondent at Philadelphia, Townsend White.[32] At one point the New York price fell low enough to stimulate Gerard's interest in an exchange, but it shot back up again when four Irish vessels arrived in port within two days.[33] Gerard followed the Philadelphia-New York price differences less closely in his correspondence after this season, but he did not permanently lose sight of them for in 1764 he was able to chide his friend Fowler in Rhode Island for sending seed to Philadelphia where the price was 11/8 instead of to New York where it was 14/.[34]

Gerard's correspondence with Boston, never too voluminous, was particularly slow to develop in the flaxseed trade, although

[28] Stewart and Montgomery, January 21, 1752; Miller, February 14, 1752; Schoals, same date.

[29] Schoals, November 25, 1752.

[30] Clark, October 5, 1750. See also Cunningham and Gardner, December 11, 1752, indicating that Gerard regretted having sold a quantity of seed which he had intended to send to Philadelphia.

[31] Cunningham and Gardner, October 23, 1752, November 25, 1752, November 27, 1752, December 11, 1752, December 26, 1752, January 10, 1753, January 12, 1753, January 17, 1753, January 23, 1753. See also letters of the same period to Mary Boyd, to Boggs, to McManus, to Cunningham and Schoals. For an interesting sidelight on the ubiquitous Cunninghams, see Harrington, 188.

[32] White, July 29, 1753 and *passim*.

[33] White, November 19, 1753.

[34] Fowler, November 5, 1764.

Boston did have quantities of that product for export. In the season of 1766–67 Henry Lloyd, Gerard's correspondent in Boston, purchased seed on their joint account to forward to New York for sale, but because Lloyd paid more than the maximum price limit he had set, Gerard expected to lose money on the transaction. This foreboding was apparently too pessimistic or at least the pattern seemed promising, for in the spring Gerard proposed to Lloyd a much larger-scale operation of the same kind for the following season.[35]

Although Gerard's proposal resulted in only one shipment of seed from Boston to New York before it was abandoned, its discussion in his letters sets forth interesting details on purchasing problems in this difficult trade. In the first place it was suggested that Lloyd might find at this season "Old Seed Left on hands which Could be bought Low." Gerard offered to become half-owner of all such seed which Lloyd could purchase at 4/ or less per bushel before October and ship while the weather was still good. Shipment, said Gerard, would be better in bulk, for this would save two pence per bushel on the freight and as much on the casks. It would also sell quicker and perhaps for one penny more per bushel. Cartage in New York and putting the seed into Gerard's store would cost something, but storage there for as much as 1,600 to 2,000 bushels would be both safe and free. If the seed arrived early in the season, Gerard thought, they would "run Little or no risque."[36]

The trial shipment of forty-five hogsheads received in May proved, however, to be a disappointment. In the first place it came in casks. The freight of 10½ pence per bushel and the loss of five pence per bushel on each cask proved to total not four pence more per bushel than bulk shipment would have cost according to Gerard's calculations as set forth above, but nine pence. "That Alone," said Gerard, "is a Reasonable Proffit." To the expenses of cartage and "Negro hier," which he had mentioned before, Gerard now added "Loss in the Measure, . . .

[35] Lloyd, December 22, 1766, April 6, 1767. Uncertainty on this point is occasioned, as all too often, by Gerard's failure to copy all his letters in his letterbook.

[36] Lloyd, April 6, 1767.

Our Trouble and Insurance." These expenses in all would amount to about 1/6 per bushel, Gerard computed, so that even if they sold the seed at 6/, "which is a good price, we Shall not get more then a Commission for our troubles and the Interest of the money" for seed purchased in Boston at 4/. He did not "Chuse to be Interested" in additional shipments of seed in casks unless at a lower price and even bulk shipment of seed bought at 4/ he thought would not be "Worth your While," especially in view of favorable crop prospects in the New York area. Lloyd apparently agreed for the subject was dropped.[37]

In purchasing seed on the New York market Gerard had numerous competitors. Those who irritated him most were the people whom he and his Irish correspondents called "scowbankers." By dictionary definition a scowbanker is merely a worthless or idle fellow, but in the flaxseed trade he was an Irishman of small means who came to American ports to buy flaxseed. Usually he intended to make his purchases with proceeds from the sale of linens which he peddled from door to door or sold at public auction. "Our town is full of them," wrote Gerard in 1750, "and there is Scarce a Vessell Comes along the wharffs [bringing flaxseed to market] but there is Immediately a half a Dozen of Them aboard bidding against Each other." These were the people, Gerard alleged, who were to be thanked "that Seed has Run so high this two years past." He hoped his correspondent would not "Suffer any of them Ever to Come over in a Vessell of yours." There was of course no stopping these traveling merchants of the old tradition, but after this time Gerard denounced them less for bidding up the price of seed than for depressing the market for Irish linen.[38]

A more respected group of buyers with whom Gerard competed was composed of Irish ship captains and supercargoes. Normally Gerard maintained very amicable relations with this group, but in 1758 its members incurred his criticism. Attempting to kill a rumor that the New York factors had raised the price of seed (which they sold on a value-based commission),

[37] Lloyd, May 28, 1767.

[38] Henderson, December 4, 1750; Schoals, February 14, 1752; Miller, same date; Ogilby, February 18, 1752.

Gerard asserted confidently that the accounts would speak for themselves and that some of the ship captains could identify, as he would not, the person (impliedly an Irish ship captain or supercargo) who offered 9/9 at the public coffee house when seed was selling at 7/6 or 8/ per bushel. "In Less then 24 hours," said Gerard, "it was Publick upwar[d]s of 60 miles around in the Cuntry." It was clearly certain of the ship captains or supercargoes whom Gerard was blaming for the inflated prices when he concluded that "some have managed their Cards very badly this season."[39]

A third group of competitors was composed of the larger-scale operators among the New York merchants. Such competitors excited Gerard's envy more than his wrath. In the 1750's, when he was competing on fairly even terms with these buyers, Gerard had no complaint, but in the 1760's when his own scale of operations had declined he found reason to comment on their competitive advantage. Seed was very scarce in 1764 and Gerard found that no one would sell any quantity "without having the Present Price Certain and the Advanced Price between this time and the first of January." This disagreeable custom, wrote Gerard, "has been Introduced by Some Persons who have Large Orders and wants to Engroce the Whole [supply]."[40] Two years later, when the price of seed fell after he had made his purchase, Gerard took a different tack. The price, he noted, "Rises and falls Two or three times in a Season and we that Ship Little parcels must Ship it when we are Called upon [either by the customer's instructions or by those who controlled shipping space] let the price then be what it will when those Gentlemen to whome the Vessel is Consigned Can Wait an Opportunity."[41] He might also have mentioned that those with many orders could charge their customers the average price paid, thus avoiding as the possessor of very few orders could not on all occasions the ire of the cus-

[39] Cunningham and Schoals, February 16, 1758. See also Cunningham and Gardner, October 23, 1752, wherein Gerard laments that Bradford's paper had announced the high price of seed in Ireland and that some Irish buyers had already raised the price.

[40] Ross, November 30, 1764.

[41] Ross, December 23, 1766.

tomer who received seed purchased at the height of the market.[42]

However seed was purchased, whether competitively in the fluctuating New York market, by his own purchasing agents in the country, or from correspondents in neighboring colonies, Gerard's next step in the marketing process was usually cleaning. That seed be well cleaned was important for two primary reasons. First, a hogshead of flaxseed which was not well cleaned usually contained also the seeds of other plants. If these seeds were not separated before the planting operation, the farmer later found himself with a flax crop which required excessive weeding, a task which was not only arduous but also injurious to the flax crop itself. Furthermore, the buyers understandably preferred to pay for as little foreign matter as possible in a hogshead of seed and as there was often little other basis for distinguishing the seed of one merchant from that of another, this quality of "cleanliness" assumed tremendous significance in the highly competitive market. The merchant who shipped improperly cleaned seed did not long retain his customers.[43]

That Gerard was fully conscious of the importance of shipping well-cleaned seed is repeatedly made clear in his letters. Early in 1752 he announced that he had "begun [this year] to Brand the flaxseed I Ship or Clean."[44] He thought that which he had sent was "the best Shipt from this Place this Season"[45] and among the best shipped from America.[46] He asked one friend who had ordered none that year to find out, if convenient, how his product was "approved of" by those who received it.[47] In 1754 he asserted that he expected "still to Improve" the cleaning process even though he would lose in so doing $1\frac{1}{4}\%$ more of the seed.[48] Years later when a Rhode Island correspondent sent him some poorly cleaned seed to be sold

[42] See page 250.

[43] See Charley, *op. cit.*, 152–59; Fitch, *op. cit.*, 919, 928; Porter, 76, 221–3, 214, 225. The references to Porter and to Fitch describe the cleaning process and testify to its importance.

[44] Schoals, February 14, 1752.

[45] Miller, February 14, 1752.

[46] Ogilby, February 18, 1752.

[47] Miller, February 14, 1752.

[48] Marshall, January 3, 1754. See also McManus, January 10, 1754.

on commission, Gerard had it re-cleaned and shipped his correspondent a barrel of "dirt etc." to prove the necessity of the expense.[49]

Because the market was so highly competitive it is understandable that in at least one year Gerard kept close account of the expenses incurred in cleaning seed. This record indicates that it took 234 man-days of labor to clean 2,561 bushels of seed, although it is not absolutely certain that all this seed was actually cleaned. Part of the labor force was Negro, either hired slaves or free Negroes. Wages paid ranged from 2/6 to 3/ per day and there is some evidence of night work. The total expenditure which Beekman made for labor in cleaning the seed was £35, a not too significant fraction of the £927 paid for the seed itself. Other records indicate that the cost of containers may have been as much as three times the cost of cleaning. Thus Gerard could well afford to attempt to distinguish his product by its cleanliness.[50]

The packing process posed few problems. Seed for Ireland was shipped in hogsheads or half-hogsheads with seven bushels passing generally as standard for a hogshead. This standard was by no means inviolable, however. When one of his correspondents asked for "good measure" on seed Gerard replied that he would be happy to put $7\frac{1}{4}$ bushels in a cask if desired; however, he would also charge for $7\frac{1}{4}$ bushels.[51] That he actually did this is suggested by his correction of an erroneous invoice in 1755–56; the overcharge resulted from the error of his servants, Gerard explained, in putting only seven bushels in a hogshead.[52]

After seed had been purchased, cleaned and packed, the next problem was how to dispose of it. There were three ways in which this might be done. One was to send it to Ireland or another American port to be sold on his own account by either the ship's captain, a supercargo, or a resident correspondent. A second was to sell to Irish buyers or their agents in New York

[49] Babcock, March 7, 1765.
[50] Daybook, 359, *passim*.
[51] Ross, January 16, 1760.
[52] Schoals, December 27, 1755. See also Schoals, January 16, 1758.

or another American port. The third, and most desirable course, was to ship to Ireland on commission for the account of an Irish correspondent. Let us examine Gerard's record with reference to each of these alternatives.

After 1750 all Gerard's shipments of seed on his own account went to Ireland consigned to one of his correspondents there. Never after that time, so far as his letterbook shows, did he send seed to another American port or consigned to a ship captain or supercargo. He never set forth his reasons, but they may be deduced. In the first place Philadelphia was the only other American port at which there was appreciable demand for flaxseed. As indicated previously, when prices were higher in the Quaker city than in New York, Philadelphia merchants could arrange to have a New York correspondent make purchases and shipments for them, thus tending to eliminate the price disparity. The fact that Beekman and Walter Franklin, both New Yorkers, shipped quantities of seed from Philadelphia in 1757–58[53] further confirms the existence of this sound substitute for physical transfer of the commodity. Beekman's reasons for consigning shipments to resident correspondents rather than to ship captains or supercargoes are also evident: the resident was in a position to return the favor, to remit part payment in advance of sale, to secure additional freight. Furthermore the resident correspondent had greater familiarity with local people, customs and conditions and, most important, he had more time in which to seek advantageous sales and to collect payments.

Gerard's shipments of seed to Ireland on his own account tended to follow business fluctuations. After his first unfortunate adventures before 1750, there were no more such shipments until the boom days of the Seven Years' War. As Gerard had declined to send seed to Rhode Island on his own account in 1750 unless provided strong guarantees which were not forthcoming, so in 1749 had he refused because of the high price of seed in New York to send seed to Ireland on a joint account

[53] See below. Porter (14–15, 171, 248–50) shows that Jackson & Bromfield often sent seed to Philadelphia or New York from Massachusetts.

with his friend Snell in London.[54] On the other hand in two instances before the Seven Years' War, Gerard shipped seed on the account of correspondents in Ireland in violation of some of their stipulations; he was probably encouraged to do so by the knowledge that the price of seed in Ireland was high and that other correspondents to whom he sent instructions to cover such a contingency would sell the seed for his account if the consignees refused to accept it.[55]

In the more prosperous years from 1757 through 1760 Gerard became more daring. He lost about £60 on a small shipment to Londonderry in 1756–57, but apparently recovered the amount in a similar venture the following season when seed was very scarce.[56] In company with his friend Walter Franklin that same season (1757–58) Gerard sent larger quantities of seed to two firms in Newry. The smaller of the two consignments sold for £408, Irish money.[57] Beekman and Franklin also plied the markets of Dublin and Belfast at the same time, but they sent more flour than flaxseed.[58] For these shipments they anticipated remittances of about £2,500 sterling to their London agent.[59] In 1758–59 when conditions were less auspicious, Gerard made two small shipments. One of them he made chiefly in order to help fill a ship which had been consigned to him by an Irish customer.[60] In the following season Beekman and John Van Horne sent their own ship to Belfast with seed and staves, but it arrived too late for the seed market. To his later regret, for the seed brought a good price in the season of 1760–61, Gerard sold his share of this seed to the Boston representative of a Londonderry firm.[61] He regretted also that he

[54] Snell, December 22, 1749.

[55] On the first instance see Bellew, January 14, 1754, January 29, 1754; Cunningham, January 30, 1754. On the second see Marshall, December 14, 1754, December 27, 1754.

[56] Marshall, January 31, 1757, September 13, 1757, November 28, 1757, January 12, 1758.

[57] Carlile, February 17, 1758; Hodgson, February 17, 1758, October 21, 1759. The letter to Carlile indicates that he had sold to advantage some flour sent by Beekman and Franklin the previous year.

[58] Benson (Dublin), September 19, 1757, March 9, 1758, May 23, 1758; Marsden (Dublin), May 25, 1758, March 9, 1759; Henderson (Belfast), December 29, 1757.

[59] Barclay, March 13, 1758.

[60] Hogg, February 19, 1759; Caldwell, same date; Marsden, March 9, 1759.

[61] Bradshaw and Alexander, March 14, 1760, July 8, 1760, November 24, 1760, July 27, 1761.

allowed advice from Ireland to discourage him from shipping on his own account in 1760–61,[62] but in the following season he again sold in New York the seed he had intended to ship[63] on his own account. In fact throughout the turbulent and frequently depressed years which remained in his career Gerard steadily preferred to let others take the risk; he stated frankly in 1770 when he thought flaxseed prospects good that because of his "Extream bad luck" he was "afraid to send any Produce on my Own account."[64]

As for insuring his own shipments Gerard had no consistent policy. He seems never to have ordered insurance from London after his two disasters of the late 1740's. That he insured one voyage in New York is evident, however, because of a three-year effort, eventually successful, to get from his correspondent in Ireland a certificate of the vessel's having gone "North about," thus entitling Gerard to a rebate on his insurance premium.[65] On the other hand one Irish correspondent received a reprimand for insuring a return shipment on Gerard's account: "I Chuse to be my own Underwritter on such Small Adventure[s]," he wrote, for insurance "Just Runs away with the Whole Profits."[66]

Sales of seed to be delivered in America rather than in Ireland are more difficult to trace. For the reasons indicated, Gerard never after 1750 sent seed to other ports for sale and when he sold in New York, as he often did, there was seldom occasion for correspondence relating to the transaction. At the conclusion of the 1748–49 season, for example, Gerard wrote Snell in London expressing his pleasure at being informed that the market in Ireland had proved good "though have but Little gone that way this year. it run so high here I sold 200 hhds . . . [for] fear it would not answer to Ship at So high a price."[67] Next season, unable to find a ship for Newry or Dublin, he sold in New York sixty hogsheads of seed originally in-

[62] Stewart, February 26, 1761.

[63] Bradshaw and Alexander, February 18, 1762.

[64] Ogle [?], January 23, 1770. See also Fowler, August 31, 1763.

[65] Benson, March 9, 1758, February 26, 1761; Stewart, same date, and August 20, 1761.

[66] Bradshaw and Alexander, November 24, 1760.

[67] Snell, June 3, 1749.

tended for one of Snell's Irish friends. This proved to be no disappointment, however, for this time the Irish price was lower than the New York price plus freight.[68] Twelve years later, as indicated above, Gerard sold in New York another 200 hogsheads which he had intended to ship on his own account; the New York price seemed high and reports from Ireland indicated that there was considerable carry-over from the preceding season.[69] Gerard's daybook indicates also that he sold seed to other New York merchants quite frequently during the 1750's.[70]

After 1749, when he first received orders to ship seed to customers in Ireland on their accounts, the commission aspect of Gerard's flaxseed business quickly became paramount. It developed largely from two initial sources of contact. First, as we have seen, was the joint venture with his uncle in 1746–47. This gave Gerard not only the entrée which we have noted with Snell, but also inaugurated a correspondence with Archibald Cunningham of Londonderry from which much later business grew.[71] Apart from the business contacts arising from this early expedition Gerard's business seems to have developed chiefly from his dealings with Irish ship captains, who frequently purchased seed in New York on their own accounts if not also on account of their owners or others.[72] One customer he "inherited" in his capacity as executor of the estate of his brother Cornelius.[73]

The orders which Gerard received from Ireland in the fall or winter contained varying instructions. Specifications as to quantity and price were minimum essentials to which were occasionally added instructions as to the date of shipment or the ship to be employed.[74] At least once an order specified that the seed sent should be of Gerard's own cleaning; this order he had

[68] Snell, December 22, 1749, January 9, 1750, March 15, 1750, April 9, 1750.

[69] Bradshaw and Alexander, February 18, 1762.

[70] Daybook, 331, 353.

[71] See note 30; Schoals, February 14, 1752.

[72] Miller, February 14, 1752; Marshall, January 7, 1754; Ross, December 5, 1753; Cunningham and Gardner, December 26, 1752.

[73] Henderson, December 30, 1754.

[74] See for example, Miller, February 14, 1752; Cunningham and Gardner, October 23, 1752, and December 26, 1752; Ross, March 7, 1765.

to decline, "my machines for Cleaning seed being all broke."[75] Frequently, however, Gerard employed his own discretion in contravening his instructions when he deemed it was in his customer's interest to do so.[76] Such conduct in 1756–57 cost him £200, all his income from cleaning and selling 800 hogsheads that season, when that "damned Villain" Charles McManus refused to accept 100 hogsheads of seed which Gerard shipped under conditions not fully covered by his instructions.[77] Although his case seemed fairly good, there is no indication that Gerard ever recovered from McManus. He took revenge by blackening the man's reputation through half of Ireland and all of New York; he doubted that McManus would "find a Man in this [place] to Accept of any of his Orders for the future."[78] He himself was more cautious thereafter.[79]

In his first few seasons Gerard had confidently assured his customers that they would obtain seed at lower prices by sending their orders early in the season. He preferred to have them in August.[80] In 1753–54, however, he confessed: "I am apt to think that flaxseed will this year be sold Cheapest the Latter end the Season, Which is Contrary to what has been for Seven years past so that In short a man heardly knows how to Govourn himself When to buy."[81] There were some later years of predictable price trends, but in the 1760's prices fluctuated most erratically; several times Gerard was embarrassed by the decline of prices after he had purchased.[82]

This fluctuation also posed the threat of shipping seed at different prices to merchants in the same Irish port, a practice

[75] Browne, February 7, 1764.

[76] See note 54.

[77] Schoals, September 20, 1757; daybook, 359; Marshall, November 28, 1757. See also McManus, February 17, 1757, and other letters to Ireland between September 12 and September 20, 1757. McManus ordered shipment by a vessel which did not arrive at New York. Gerard shipped by another vessel which was delayed two months by an embargo, causing it to arrive in Ireland much too late for the season. McManus weakened his position by accepting some seed shipped under similar circumstances on the same vessel.

[78] Schoals, September 20, 1757.

[79] See Hogg, January 10, 1759.

[80] Snell, October 4, 1750; Stewart and Montgomery, January 21, 1752; Schoals, December 11, 1752.

[81] Ross, December 5, 1753. See also Bellew, January 29, 1754; McManus, January 10, 1754.

[82] Ross, December 23, 1766, January 12, 1769; Kirk, June 2, 1767.

not calculated to win the favor of both recipients. In at least one year, however, Gerard avoided this danger by observing the "Custom of Averaging," *i.e.*, calculating the average price paid for all the seed he bought during the season and charging that price to all his customers. Such a system "Cannot well be avoided," Gerard explained to a protesting customer, "as most of the Orders are Come to hand before our Seed is brought to Markit, which is in the Month of December, that we Cannot in Justice Give the Preference to any Particular order." This statement as well as remarks in other letters suggest that Gerard did not bother to average unless he saw that he would otherwise favor one customer above another who might find out about it. It probably was used regularly by those whose customers were numerous.[83]

Gerard's commission rate for shipping flaxseed seems never to have changed.[84] In 1751–52 he informed a new customer quite flatly that "for buying, Storeing and Shipping" flaxseed he expected 7½%. Under that, he said, "I Cannot do you Justice."[85] In the 1760's competition lowered the prevailing rate, but Gerard was unmoved. There were "several" in New York, he said in answering a complaint, who charged the same as he. Furthermore, he added, "I would Rather Decline Shiping any then do it at 5 per Cent it is the dearest Earnt Commission of any in the way of business."[86] Anticipating protest from a new customer in 1767 Gerard defended his rate as "what I have Alway[s] Charged"; he was sure his customer would receive value for the rate in the "Quality of the Seed etc."[87] Upon the arrival of the anticipated protest Gerard expressed no doubt as to "what you say Relative to Others Charging You but 5 per Cent Commission. . . ." He held his ground, however, and his customer—while he wanted to.[88]

[83] Knoxs and Alcock, July 25, 1758. See also Cunningham and Gardner, December 26, 1752. It is clear that the average in this case did not include all customers of the season. See also letters to Boyd, December 19, 1752, McManus, same date; Schoals, December 15, 1757.

[84] He once charged 5% instead of the usual 7½% but this was at a time when linens were very hard to sell and he had purchased the seed at an exorbitant price in order to induce the seller to buy linens belonging to his Irish customer (Ross, February 2, 1757).

[85] Schoals, February 14, 1752.

[86] Ross, February 10, 1766.

[87] Kirk, January 5, 1767.

[88] Kirk, June 2, 1767, January 20, 1768.

A major factor in making flaxseed commissions the "dearest Earnt" in the world of business was the shipping problem. One of its many facets was that old bugaboo of businessmen—interference by the government. Gerard's loss of £200 on his shipment to McManus in 1757 would probably not have occurred had the ship not been caught by a two-month embargo imposed in preparation for Lord Loudon's vain expedition against Louisbourg.[89] It is highly probable that McManus would have accepted the seed had it arrived in season.

Another governmental impediment in the path of trade was the wartime requirement that bonds be posted to guarantee that shipments of provisions from New York would not be taken to enemy ports; such bonds were to be cancelled by a certificate from the customs officials at the port of destination. Bonds were not required for flaxseed shipments, but they were for flour or other provisions which were occasionally sent to Ireland in conjunction with flaxseed shipments.[90]

In 1758 Gerard obliged one of his customers by becoming security for such a bond posted by the captain of the customer's ship which Gerard had loaded. Two years later he had to write urgently for the required certificate which he received, he later reported, "Just in time to prevent being sued by the Custom house officers."[91] On another occasion the officers did sue Gerard for £1,000 in a similar situation. The certificate arrived too late, but an undisclosed "defect" in the bond encouraged Gerard to think that he could "with some Cost Mannage the Kings Attorney."[92] He apparently thought correctly, for he did not mention the subject again as he most certainly would have done had he lost the case.

The heavy hand of government fell also upon one of Gerard's customers in Ireland. At the conclusion of a voyage plagued by many misfortunes the customer's ship was seized in its home port for carrying without proper papers a quantity of sugar

[89] See Justin Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, V (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887), 515; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 432.

[90] The text of the regulation is printed in the *New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy*, July 11, 1757.

[91] Schoals, May 7, 1760, January 26, 1761.

[92] Benson, February 26, 1761; Stewart, September 21, 1761.

which Gerard had shipped at his customer's order. Timid customs officers at New York, fearful of forfeiting their commissions, refused to issue a certificate which would have undone the damage, but Gerard obtained from the persons who had sold him the sugar affidavits attesting that it had come from prize cargo. These certificates Gerard was sure would "Release your ship."[93]

Another problem to shippers, although a smaller one than might be expected, was inclement weather. Coming as it did in the dead of winter, New York's flaxseed season was seldom an auspicious one for shipping. He could, Gerard once wrote, have engaged to ship his customer's order on a new "Two deck Vessell but she is yet to be La[u]nc[h]ed in the Cuntry and I was afraid she [would] get froze up and then must have disappointed you."[94] He warned Cunningham and Gardner at Philadelphia of the possibility that "Your Vessel Could not git in here" at the end of December to load flaxseed.[95] The next season such fears proved realistic, for the vessel upon which he had intended to ship "received much Damage with the Ice and is now full of water." Consequently its owners had "given Up the Voiage." His only other shipping prospect was a vessel so small and old that Gerard doubted it would reach Ireland.[96] That he made no shipment in this instance is perhaps less remarkable, however, than that there were so few such instances.

Much more troublesome than the weather in making shipping arrangements was the usual imbalance of potential cargo and shipping space. Whichever way the balance swung Gerard was usually in trouble. If there were too many ships for the quantity of cargo available, then Gerard had probably had a ship consigned to him by one of his customers. This meant a scramble for freight.[97] If, on the other hand, ships were scarce

[93] Hogg, July 5, 1759.

[94] Henderson, December 4, 1750.

[95] Cunningham and Gardner, November 26, 1750.

[96] Stewart, January 21, 1752. See also Ogilby, January 22, 1763, reporting that a vessel had been detained some time because of ice; also Cunningham and Gardner, November 26, 1750, noting that vessels with seed for New York had been frozen up in "New England."

[97] Cunningham and Schoals, January 17, 1755, February 2, 1757; Schoals, December 27, 1755, December 15, 1757, January 16, 1758.

and cargo plentiful, then Gerard probably had no ship consigned him and had to scramble to find shipping space.[98] Certain trade practices further complicated the situation. Orders from Ireland frequently specified the vessel on which shipment was to be made and sometimes set a time limit. As one might expect there were times when no ship could be found to meet a specified deadline;[99] there were times when Gerard could not get freight aboard the specified ship[100] and, worse, there were times when he had ships to load and shipments to make, but could not make the obvious combination without contravening his instructions.[101] Here, indeed, were problems to tax the merchant's ingenuity.

A lesser difficulty for the commission shipper of flaxseed was the question of primage—the tip customarily bestowed upon ship captains. This practice evoked Gerard's irritated comment in the season of 1755–56. Complaining that one captain "would not sign the bills of Lading without I paid him 4½d per hhd," Gerard asserted that there had never been "more Contention among the Merchants here and Masters of Vessel about freights and Primage." Because it was a charge borne ultimately by the consignee, Gerard asked positive instructions on paying it.[102] Whatever the answer to this request, it seems to have solved the problem for the subject does not recur in Gerard's letters.

Having complied with governmental regulations, escaped the elements, solved the puzzles of shipping space and bribed the captain, there remained for the commission agent principally the problem of insurance. Generally when he had definite information on the amount, the value, and the date of a shipment Gerard would notify his customer by another vessel which was to sail shortly before the ship bearing his cargo. If the ship-

[98] Snell, December 26, 1752; Cunningham and Gardner, January 17, 1753; Bellew, January 14, 1754, January 29, 1754; Schoals, December 27, 1755.

[99] Miller, February 14, 1752; Ross, March 7, 1765.

[100] Cunningham and Gardner, December 26, 1752; Bellew, January 14, 1754; McManus, February 17, 1757. Frequently the cause was that the consignee monopolized the space himself.

[101] Cunningham and Schoals, November 29, 1756; Hogg, January 10, 1759.

[102] Ross, January 8, 1756; Schoals, December 27, 1755. A letter to Cunningham and Schoals, December 26, 1752, breaks off in the middle of a comment on the same subject.

ment arrived first, then the correspondents had saved the insurance premium. If the other vessel arrived first, then they could ponder whether or not to order insurance.[103] In wartime some of Gerard's customers varied this pattern considerably. Charles McManus, for example, ordered Gerard to write directly to London for insurance, but only against capture.[104] Another shipment of 1757 was insured in New York where the rate was 10% although Gerard had expected it to be only 8%.[105] To a third correspondent who had instructed him to order insurance through a London agent, Gerard expressed the opinion that "Insurance from hence to Europe will be made [here] at Less Premium then in London." He offered to arrange it, if desired.[106] At the conclusion of the war, however, the normal pattern seems to have returned.[107]

Having disposed of the seed, either in America or Ireland, on commission or on his own account, Gerard next had to be concerned about payment. Payments for sales made in America were presumably arranged in much the same manner as payments for transactions in other commodities. This would be true in particular if the buyers, as was most frequently the case, were New York merchants acting either for themselves or for Irish correspondents; it would tend to be less true if the purchasers were "scowbankers" or Irish ship captains who might have exchanged linens or other Irish products for seed.

For his shipments to Ireland on his own account Gerard requested payment to the credit of his account with a London correspondent or a return shipment to New York of some Irish commodity which he thought could be sold to advantage. The former practice Gerard employed from 1757 through 1759 when, as we have seen, joint shipments with Walter Franklin in one season were expected to establish a credit of about

[103] Cunningham and Schoals, December 26, 1752, January 28, 1757; Knoxs and Alcock, January 8, 1759. In each of these cases the notice sent to Ireland took the form of a letter to the customer's London correspondent ordering insurance.

[104] McManus, February 17, 1757.

[105] Ross, February 2, 1757. Gerard charged only 9% in order not to disappoint his customers too greatly. He wrote them on February 21 that the rate was then 14%.

[106] Knoxs and Alcock, September 6, 1757.

[107] See Ogilby, January 22, 1763.

£2,500 in London.[108] Such credits in London Gerard desired for two purposes: first to enable him to make desired purchases either of some marketable commodity available on favorable terms in London or of items for his own use; second, to enable him to gain additional income by selling in New York sterling bills of exchange of his own draft on London.

In 1760 provision shortages and the low price of bills in New York induced Gerard to vary the formula. In March of that year he joined John Van Horne in sending a sloop loaded with seed and barrel staves to Bradshaw and Alexander in Belfast. He ordered beef, butter and tallow in return. Because the flaxseed market was unfavorable when he ordered other shipments, mostly of butter, Gerard sent bills of exchange or authorized payment from his account in London. The Belfast merchants in 1762 declined Gerard's suggestion that they invest equally with him in shipments to New York and the correspondence foundered in the bad times of 1763.[109] A similar relationship with Annesly Stewart of Dublin was smaller in volume and endured for an even shorter time.[110]

Payments to Gerard for his expenses and commission in sending seed on the account of Irish correspondents follow a pattern similar to that of the payments for shipments on Gerard's account. Initially the emphasis was on bills of exchange, but in the 1760's payments tended more frequently to be in Irish linen or other Irish products, proceeds from the sale of which Gerard credited to the accounts of his Irish correspondents.

The problems posed by the bill-of-exchange aspect of the flaxseed trade were relatively few. Some correspondents had to be informed that New Yorkers preferred bills on London to

[108] See note 58. On this point see also letters of the period to Caldwell, Marshall, Benson, Henderson, Carlile, Hodgson as well as Barclay. For a not too significant exception, see Hogg, February 19, 1759, July 5, 1759.

[109] Bradshaw and Alexander, February 29, 1760, March 14, 1760, March 24, 1760, July 8, 1760, *September 2, 1760*, September 9, 1760, *November 24, 1760*, July 27, 1761, *February 18, 1762*, August 9, 1762, September 23, 1762, February 4, 1763, *August 10, 1763*. The italicized dates are those of letters which mention the receipt of shipments from Ireland.

[110] Stewart, March 4, 1760, October 14, 1760, February 26, 1761, August 20, 1761, September 21, 1761.

those on Ireland; these men then emulated their better-educated competitors in arranging with London correspondents to pay bills drawn by Gerard on their accounts.[111] Because as a drawer he was liable in the case of non-payment to the person to whom he sold a bill, Gerard chose to instruct his own London correspondent to stand ready to pay any such defective instruments;[112] he informed one Irish merchant who had been tardy in providing for payment of the previous year's bill that future bills on his account would have to be sold at from 3% to 4% under the market rate if this year's bill were not promptly accepted.[113] It was also difficult to make Irish correspondents realize that bills at sixty days sight had to be sold for as much as 2½% less than bills at thirty days sight.[114] Finally Gerard had to exert himself to see that his bills were sold before the departure of the last London vessel of the season, for after that event the price of bills dropped markedly.[115] Suffering from the decline in his scale of operation as well as from the dulling impact of peace and the non-importation movements, the bill market in the 1760's lost most of its significance in Gerard's flaxseed trade.[116]

The most important commodity to be substituted for bills of exchange in payments for flaxseed was Irish linen. The change was really not properly a substitution, however, for Gerard had received linen in payment for flaxseed shipments all through the 1750's. What happened was that correspondence with flaxseed-buyers who paid by bill of exchange simply ceased in large measure while the correspondence with mer-

[111] Henderson, December 30, 1754. February 14, 1757; Schoals, February 14, 1757, December 15, 1757; Cunningham, February 14, 1757 (no later letters to Cunningham). See Gerard's letter to Cunningham and Gardner at Philadelphia, October 23, 1752, for a report on the practices of the New York money market.

[112] Barclay, March 10, 1757, July 16, 1759. See Harrington, 113, on the costs of protested bills.

[113] McManus, December 14, 1754.

[114] McConnell, January 25, 1762; Schoals, February 5, 1762; Browne, February 7, 1764. See also Snell, November 13, 1750.

[115] Schoals, December 11, 1752; Cunningham and Gardner, December 11, 1752.

[116] See Ogilby, January 22, 1763, and Ross, January 23, 1770, on the "lowness" of bills. Beekman's letters afford no clues as to how much use was made of bills of exchange in the 1760's by those who operated on a large scale.

chants who purchased flaxseed with linen increased in some measure despite an overall decline in the business.

This change of emphasis in the form of payment was a development not at all to Gerard's liking despite the commission of 7½% which he made by selling linens for his correspondents.[117] One reason for Gerard's dislike of this aspect of the business was that it put him in competition with the scowbankers who regularly loaded the vendue houses or hawked their linens about the streets, underselling the merchants by as much as 25%.[118] It also placed him in competition with the established dry goods merchants, such as his cousins, James and Gerard W. Beekman, who knew the business better and had regular customers. In the 1760's there were added to these difficulties the patriotic and practical devotion to homespun, a greater shortage of cash, and the problem of long-term debts and debt-collection, especially severe when the Stamp Act crisis closed the courts. Probably Gerard's greatest objection to selling linens for his correspondents, however, was their maddening practice of invoicing their product at exorbitant prices.

Gerard's exasperation with this practice was long in developing. As early as 1752 he told the principal offender that his goods were 15% to 20% overcharged and expressed the desire that some dry goods merchant would be named to whom he could turn them over.[119] For years, however, he continued to receive linens from the same correspondent even though he sold them regularly below their invoice value. In 1765, for example, he rendered an account sales which he thought would "still turn to account" despite being only 85% of the invoice value.[120] By 1766, when he was no longer too eager for business, Gerard stated quite flatly: "You Certainly deceive yourselves by Adding or Laying Such a high Profit on them [*i.e.* linens] in your Invoice at the same time Renders [it] very disagreeable to your factors." He hoped they would not send him any more "unless you Can Invoice them as Cheap as your Neighbours."[121]

[117] Schoals, February 14, 1752.

[118] See Schoals, February 14, 1752; Ross, November 30, 1764.

[119] Ross, March 12, 1752.

[120] Ross, January 19, 1765.

[121] Ross, December 15, 1766.

In 1768 when he found their linens "Still to be Over Charged" Gerard indicated that because the practice "has been so much A Custom Among the [Irish] Gentlemen" American buyers, "not Ignorant of the Quality and Prices of linens . . . pay No Regard to the Cost" as stated in the invoice.[122] In 1770 Gerard insisted that he would be "Very glad" if they would arrange for him to draw bills on London for their flaxseed purchases instead of sending linens, "for Realy it is Out of my Way to Sell them."[123] On this inconclusive note Gerard's letterbook ends, but one suspects that having survived so long his linen sales probably continued.

Other than linens there were few products which the Irish merchants were able to sell to advantage with any regularity in the New York market. One Irish ship consigned to Gerard in 1754 brought butter from Ireland, salt, sherry, and olives from Cadiz; the salt, having arrived in good season for fall meat-packing purposes, sold well. However, New York did not like the sherry; the olives all spoiled and the butter, "haveing been melted when in the warm Climate is now Congealed and seams Curdeled and is Oily." It would sell poorly, Gerard thought.[124] At one time or another, especially during the war years, Gerard recommended sending salt, butter, cheese, and certain dry goods other than linens, but none of his recommendations worked out to satisfaction.[125] Probably the best advice he rendered was that given Adam Schoals of Londonderry in 1762: "I Cant Recomend One Article You Can send to this market that has a prospect of Gain."[126]

Just as there was no Irish product save linen which Gerard could normally sell to advantage in New York so there was

[122] Ross, February 3, 1768.

[123] Ross, January 23, 1770. For other references to linen sales, see Hogg, January 16, 1760; Schoals, January 16, 1758, February 16, 1753; Ogilby, January 11, 1762, January 21, 1762; Kirk, January 20, 1769, January 23, 1770.

[124] Cunningham and Schoals, December 17, 1754, January 17, 1755. See also Schoals, January 16, 1758, November 29, 1758.

[125] See the following letters, all to Schoals unless otherwise indicated: on salt, November 29, 1756, February 2, 1757, January 16, 1758, November 29, 1758; butter, November 29, 1758, January 16, 1760 (Hogg), January 22, 1760; cheese, November 29, 1758, May 7, 1760, September 9, 1760; dry goods, January 5, 1767 (Kirk), January 20, 1769 (Kirk).

[126] Schoals, February 2, 1762.

nothing but flaxseed which Irish merchants chose regularly to purchase from him. Staves provided perhaps the closest approach to an exception. Gerard shipped staves in at least five seasons, principally as a filler when he could not get freight to load a ship consigned to him.[127] He apologized, for example, for sending some staves and flour on Schoals's ship in the season of 1757–58; he thought it "more for Your Interest to Send you the flour and staves if You Only made a freight out of them then send her not full."[128] When he had no ship consigned him, Gerard's shipments to his Irish correspondents were almost invariably flaxseed alone. Other commodities about which the Irish correspondents inquired in addition to staves included rum, lime juice, flour, and lumber, but prices were very rarely satisfactory.[129] Such shipments, like the gifts of apples and cranberries which Gerard at times sent his better customers,[130] were purely incidental to the main business in flaxseed.

The volume of Gerard's operations in the flaxseed trade was considerable. He was only thirty and had not long ceased referring to himself as "a young beginer in trade"[131] when in 1749 he formed his grandiose plans for conquest of the market.[132] Three seasons later he hit his peak; in the season of 1752–53 he sold nearly 1,000 hogsheads of seed which he had purchased for £2,287. After several poor seasons he shipped 800 hogsheads in 1756–57, but apparently he never did so well again.[133]

These figures indicate that Gerard in his best years had captured an impressive portion of the New York market. Total New York exports in a good year ran about 15,000 hogsheads,

[127] Snell, November 15, 1750; Cunningham and Schoals, December 26, 1752, February 2, 1757; Cunningham, January 30, 1754 (on hand but not shipped); Hogg, February 19, 1759.

[128] Schoals, January 10, 1758.

[129] On rum, Marshall, December 14, 1754; Hogg, November 29, 1758; Knoxs and Alcock, January 8, 1759; Kirk, January 23, 1770; on lime juice, Cunningham, January 30, 1754, February 10, 1754; Cunningham and Schoals, December 26, 1752; on flour, McManus, January 10, 1755; Schoals, January 10, 1758; Knoxs and Alcock, January 8, 1759; on lumber, Hogg, January 10, 1759, February 19, 1759.

[130] Cunningham and Schoals, February 2, 1757; Schoals, February 5, 1762; Ross, February 2, 1757.

[131] Snell, November 25, 1747.

[132] Snell, December 22, 1749.

[133] Daybook, 371–2, 375–6; Schoals, September 20, 1757. The daybook record terminates in 1757; the letters indicate, however, that the years spanned by the letterbook were clearly his busiest.

although in one year of bad crop conditions they fell to about one-third of that figure.[134] Two firms which Gerard cited as particularly large-scale shippers each had orders for 3,000 hogsheads in one busy year, but there were two men in one firm and three in the other.[135] Thus there were apparently few individuals in New York who had invested more in the flaxseed trade than had Gerard in his busiest years.

As to the reasons for Gerard's retreat from the trade in which he had so quickly won a leading place one can only speculate. Certainly he disliked the unpredictable price fluctuations, the necessity of selling dry goods, and some other aspects of the trade whose commissions he regarded as the "dearest" earned in any business. Although he once hinted that the decline in his flaxseed business was not to his liking, Gerard's withdrawal seems in some degree at least to have constituted a voluntary retirement conforming to a general pattern discernable in his other business interests which are now to be examined.

[134] Schoals, December 15, 1757; Ross, March 4, 1764; Carlile, February 17, 1758.

[135] Snell, November 16, 1749. One firm was composed of Paul Richards and Gerard's uncle, Cornelius Van Horne; the other was McEvers, Hayne, and Clarkson.

8

DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS INTERESTS

A Topical View

GERARD G. BEEKMAN was never inclined to put all his eggs in one basket. Even at the height of his interest in the flaxseed trade he found time to pursue other lines of investment. Particularly worthy of attention among these are his ventures in indigo, shipping, insurance, and government contracting.

Indigo was the only commodity in addition to flaxseed for which Gerard kept extensive records in his daybook. These indigo accounts covering the years 1751–57 reveal, in conjunction with Gerard's letters, a trade pattern totally different from that of his flaxseed business, but quite similar to those for various other commodities in which he dealt.

That Gerard's indigo and flaxseed trades were different merely reflected basic differences in the two trades as a whole. Flaxseed was a product of the northern colonies for which the only major market lay in the highly specialized linen manufacturing areas of Ireland. The dark-blue dyestuff, on the other hand, was a plantation product of the West Indies and the southern colonies which could be marketed virtually wherever textiles were manufactured. The comparative importance of the two trades is suggested by the fact that the sterling value of American indigo exports in 1770 was nearly four times the comparable figure for flaxseed.[1] Furthermore, nearly every rural

[1] Emory R. Johnson et al., *History of the Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1915), I, 118–19.

American household, north or south, which made its own linen, woolen, or cotton homespun, was a potential buyer of plantation-produced indigo; flaxseed not only had a more limited usefulness but it could be produced on almost any farm.

Gerard never attempted to ship indigo to Great Britain, but concentrated on supplying the market in the northern colonies. This he did in a variety of ways. He obtained indigo from the areas of its production in the West Indies and the southern colonies or from other importers, whether in London, in New York, or one of the neighboring colonies. He might purchase the indigo outright, as he did in New York and when dealing with the West Indies or with London; alternatively he might have it sent him to be sold on commission, as he did frequently in his dealings with the southern colonies and the northern port cities. Gerard's indigo customers were often merchants in Rhode Island, Philadelphia, or Boston, as well as residents of the New York area.[2] Because many of his indigo adventures were joint enterprises in which his partners sometimes bore the correspondence burden, Gerard's letters present a picture of the indigo business which is less integrated than that of his flaxseed trade. Nevertheless several features of his indigo business are to be seen.

Its most striking aspect is the rise of Carolina indigo in competition with that produced in the French West Indies. When Gerard entered the trade, French indigo clearly dominated the market. Production in the British West Indies had fallen away to insignificant proportions and the bounty voted by Parliament in 1748 was just beginning to promote quality and quantity production in the southern colonies.[3]

[2] On Gerard's arbitrage with Rhode Island in indigo, see Thurston, September 26, 1750; Gilbert, December 1, 1750; Fowler, *passim*; with Boston, see Leveritt, March 30, 1752; Briggs, January 16, 1753; Berjeau, February 3, 1753; Lloyd, *passim*; with Philadelphia, see Sayre, February 5, 1753, December 15, 1755, December 29, 1755, February 11, 1756; White, July 23, 1753, October 6, 1754. On Gerard's purchases at New York, see Thurston, September 26, 1750; Rutherford, March 16, 1752. See below for citations with reference to purchases in the West Indies, the southern colonies and London.

[3] Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739–1763* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 101; Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1933), I, 290–297.

Accordingly Gerard's earliest orders were for the French product. Such orders he directed to the Dutch islands of Curaçao[4] and St. Eustatius,[5] the British Windward Islands,[6] Barbados[7] and Jamaica[8] as well as to Rhode Island[9] and Philadelphia.[10] His biggest success resulted from a purchase of one thousand pounds of French indigo at Jamaica in 1754. Gerard boasted the next summer that he could name his own price for indigo "to go to Boston and Philadelphia."[11] Yet this was his last importation of the French product for many years.

Meanwhile Carolina indigo had been gaining popularity. In 1750 when he had received Carolina indigo to sell on commission Gerard reported bluntly to his correspondent: "No Person here will buy it."[12] In 1753, however, he cautiously ordered a quantity on his own account from Philadelphia; he sent a sample of the kind he wanted.[13] That caution was warranted is evident in that poor indigo sold with difficulty at 3/9 per pound in Boston next year although the best quality French indigo was expected to bring £4 or more in the spring when demand increased.[14] To a southern correspondent who had sent indigo to be sold on commission Gerard wrote discouragingly in June of 1755: "I Cannot Give You any Incouragement for sending any More. The best of Carolina Indigo Would not Sell here. it has a bad Name among the Cuntry People. some will not Look of it if you says its from Carolina."[15] Two months later, however, although still discouraged from sending Carolina indigo to Boston, Gerard asserted that he sold it daily in New York for 9/ or 10/ while "Very good" French sold for only 15/.[16] Later in 1755 Gerard became involved in a bitter quarrel with his Philadelphia correspondent because a quantity of very low-grade indigo, apparently Carolina, was found to be mixed in with a lot which had been sent to Gerard as French. The

[4] Van Ranst, June 29, 1750.
[5] Miller, December 3, 1750.
[6] Taylor, August 8, 1750.
[7] Riddle, September 14, 1750.
[8] William Lloyd (later Seymour and Lloyd), June 8, 1753, October 21, 1754, November 20, 1754. For an interesting discussion of the peculiar legal status of this trade, see Pares, 417–19.
[9] Fowler, March 21, 1752.
[10] Sayre, December 17, 1755.
[11] Fowler, July 8, 1755.
[12] Gilbert, September 31 [*sic*], 1750.
[13] Sayre, February 5, 1753.
[14] Lloyd, December 2, 1754.
[15] Swan, June 9, 1755. See also Ede, December 24, 1755, March 3, 1756.
[16] Lloyd, August 29, 1755.

low-grade admixture, Gerard wrote, would not sell for 8/ per pound although he was then selling "fine Copper Couler" Cape Fear indigo at 12/.[17]

By the beginning of 1756 Gerard was confidently shipping to Boston on his own account Carolina indigo "Little Inferior to French" and costing 35% less.[18] That Carolina had conquered was evident in Gerard's remark in March of the same year that the overstocked New York market had received more than 12,000 pounds of Carolina indigo as opposed to 2,000 "from among the french." Gerard himself appears to have dropped out of the trade at this point, but when he returned to it briefly in the late 1760's Carolina indigo was more than holding its own. Then Gerard sent to his friend Dick Sharpe, who had gone to London on business, a sample of Carolina indigo which he said "has at Present the preference to Either french or Carolina that [is] hard and of Copper Couler." Gerard thought Sharpe should bring back from London on their joint account equal quantities of the preferred Carolina and of French indigo if the prices were satisfactory.[19] He never again ordered French indigo, but in the following year he sent to South Carolina for a quantity of that colony's product and declared his intention to "Order some Annually" if it proved profitable.[20]

In addition to French and Carolina indigo a third kind of blue dyestuff competed to some extent in the markets of the North American continent. This was "stone blue," an inferior product of English manufacture based apparently on copper ore and perhaps mixed with the vegetable indigo.[21] It was very cheap, selling for 15 pence to 2/ sterling per pound. Introduced to this type of "indigo" by his friend Sharpe who had come to know it during a London apprenticeship, Gerard imported it

[17] Sayre, December 15, 1755, December 29, 1755, February 11, 1756.

[18] Lloyd, January 30, 1756.

[19] Sharpe, December 22, 1766. See also Sharpe, December 4, 1766, and compare Harrington, 169.

[20] Torrans, March 2, 1767. See also Torrans, October 4, 1768, in which another order appears. The termination of the letterbook in 1770 and the erratic manner in which it was kept create uncertainty as to how long Gerard continued these orders.

[21] A copper ore called "Azurite blue" was used as a blue dye although it was not permanent. Gerard's letters seem to indicate that what he imported was a combination of the ore and indigo.

frequently between 1753 and 1756, usually from Sharpe's brother-in-law, William Edmonds, a stationer in London. Somewhere on the American continent Gerard discovered a market at which he could sell about 1,000 pounds of this product every spring—if, as he constantly reminded his supplier, there were no war. If there were a war, said Gerard, his shipment would lose half its value at once. Adding to the cloak-and-dagger atmosphere, Gerard required that the product be marked as "merchantdize" and that no person "belonging or Tradeing [to] these parts" be acquainted of the shipment "for Little Supplys the markit we send it to." The trade stopped promptly with the beginning of the Seven Years War and did not resume with the restoration of peace.[22]

As the "stone blue" trade stopped with the war so did Gerard's trade in indigo itself. Whatever his reasons for this lack of interest in the indigo trade during wartime, Gerard could not complain of his profits, for in the six years from 1751 to 1757 indigo ventures had brought him, according to his calculations, a net income of £1,307,[23] or an average of more than £200 per year. Because most of this came from joint ventures with Sharpe, Kortright, Van Zandt and others in various combinations, Gerard's records were minimal, giving little evidence as to his capital investment, but it would have to have been nearly £2,000 yearly to have made this an unattractive return. This profit record helps to explain why in the late 1760's, when he was bearish on most business ventures, Gerard could at least contemplate if not actually undertake annual importations of Carolina indigo on his own account.

Marine insurance was a constant concern of Gerard's as it was of all contemporary shippers and ship-owners. His letters abound with tales of vessels or cargoes lost or damaged seriously due to normal dangers of the sea. Furthermore there were pirates to be reckoned with in some areas, and in war

[22] Edmonds, October 2, 1754. See also Reynolds, December 24, 1753; Edmonds, November 5, 1754, June 5, 1755, June 29, 1755, July 7, 1755, January 13, 1756, June 16, 1756. Harrington, 94, assumed that this product was fraudulently sold as indigo. It may have been; Beekman's references are not clear on the point.

[23] Daybook, 350. See also pages 373–5, 367–8. 329–30, 323–26, 313, 299–301.

years, which constituted fully one-third of the period spanned by his letterbooks, there were the far greater hazards of enemy men-of-war and privateers. Gerard not only sought protection for himself against these risks, but helped often, especially in wartime, to bring protection to others for whom he acted as agent or as underwriter.

In insuring his own interests Gerard demonstrated considerable flexibility. In the late 1740's, when he was already obtaining insurance at New York for Rhode Island correspondents, Gerard wrote to London for insurance on his own ventures to Ireland, probably because this offered him the opportunity of "saving" the insurance if his vessel arrived before the order for insurance, although he may also have received lower premiums.[24] He insured his share of an African expedition in London[25] and wrote there, too, in 1752 for insurance on a hazardous wintertime voyage from Jamaica to New York.[26] In 1754 Philadelphia attracted several orders for insurance on West Indian voyages in which Gerard had an interest[27] and the next year he inquired about rates at Boston.[28] Both Philadelphia and Boston proved unsatisfactory if one judges by the lack of further discussion of the subject of insurance in Gerard's letters to those places. In 1757, when he was himself engaged in underwriting, Gerard recommended New York insurance to Irish correspondents as more advantageous even than that of the London underwriters.[29] As evidence of his sincerity it should be noted that Gerard followed his own advice when he shipped to Ireland the next year.[30] Furthermore, later letters suggest that Gerard continued to

[24] Snell, November 25, 1747, July 5, 1748, January 20, 1749, March 2, 1749, March 15, 1749, July 14, 1749, September 23, 1749, November 16, 1749, December 22, 1749, April 9, 1750, September 29, 1750, November 8, 1750.

[25] Snell, January 20, 1749, June 3, 1749, July 5, 1749.

[26] Scott, December 15, 1752.

[27] White, September 30, 1754, October 6, 1754, October 21, 1754. In 1758 Gerard tried to obtain a lower premium for a correspondent by threatening the New York underwriter that he would send to Philadelphia if his terms were not granted. He failed to win the lower rate, however, and he did not carry out his threat (Freebody, January 25, 1758).

[28] Lloyd, December 22, 1755. See below for instances in which Boston merchants did insure at New York.

[29] Knoxs and Alcock, September 6, 1757.

[30] Benson, March 9, 1758.

rely on New York underwriters after that, although in 1760 he noted that on small shipments he preferred to be his own underwriter because insurance "Just Runs away with the Whole Profits."[31]

As an agent Gerard obtained insurance contracts from New York underwriters, paid premiums, and negotiated settlements in case of loss. His terms were ½% for obtaining insurance and 2½% for receiving and transmitting payments for losses.[32] His customers were nearly all Rhode Islanders although he did obtain insurance on occasion for shippers from Boston, Ireland, and North Carolina. The voyages of the Rhode Islanders and the Bostonians for which Gerard obtained insurance were usually Caribbean ventures.[33] The one North Carolinian had insured a shipment to New York and the Irish merchants sought insurance only on a few shipments from New York.[34]

Premium specifications were often complex and the sums to be paid substantial. Rates ranged from a low of about 4% to the incredible high of 70%,[35] although most would probably have fallen between 10% and 30%. The sums insured were often £600 to £800; one contract was for £2,000.[36] Thus one can comprehend Gerard's complaint of 1762, when money was especially scarce, over the delay in remunerating him for a premium he had advanced.[37] In the Caribbean trade higher premiums were required if the vessel was to stop at more than one port, although the underwriters were reluctant even at higher premiums to encourage this kind of island hopping.[38] Partial refunds of premiums were often offered in exchange

[31] Bradshaw and Alexander, November 24, 1760.

[32] Jackson, August 17, 1761, May 5, 1762, May 31, 1762; Malbone, October 10, 1761. These were generally accepted terms.

[33] For exceptions, see Townsend, September 7, 1762 (London), October 5, 1761 (Newfoundland and Lisbon), May 18, 1761 (Amsterdam).

[34] On the North Carolina shipment, see Ede, December 24, 1755. For the Irish shipments, see Chapter VII.

[35] Malbone, August 16, 1762; Jackson, May 3, 1762. Both were of course wartime figures. See Harrington, 155, on usual rates.

[36] Champlin, January 25, 1762; Townsend, August 3, 1762; Southwick and Clark, April 6, 1762.

[37] Southwick and Clark, September 17, 1762.

[38] Champlin, January 25, 1762; Malbone, January 18, 1762. See also Townsend, December 9, 1761. Here 2% was to be added to the premium if the vessel stopped at Philadelphia en route from the West Indies to Rhode Island.

for proof of compliance with certain conditions calculated to reduce the risk, a practice copied as were most others in the business from the customs of London underwriters.[39]

When losses occurred, Gerard usually found it difficult to negotiate a satisfactory settlement. Custom dictated that the payment of 98% of the insured value should be made three months after proper proof of loss had been furnished. Earlier payment could be had at a discount.[40] The underwriters seem to have been fairly casual about proof of loss until the later years of the Seven Years' War. Their reason for clamping down then is suggested by Gerard's observations of 1762 and 1763. "Our offices," he wrote, "have Lost on $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Policys Done for [Rhode Islanders]." Little more than a week later it had become three fourths and in 1763 it was "all most all."[41]

In operating as agent for his correspondents Gerard found it much easier to collect from underwriters for total losses than for those which were called "average" losses. In the case of "average" losses the insured claimed payment from the insurer for partial damage to his insured interest or for recovery of a contribution levied against him and the other shippers to compensate the ship-owner for such expenses as ransom to captors or remuneration to a shipper whose freight had had to be jettisoned to save the ship.

In view of the fact that many leading cases in English law on average losses were still in the future at the time of the Seven Years' War, it is understandable that Gerard had great difficulty in adjusting such claims.[42] In 1762 he was nearly ready to give up; after several difficult negotiations he wrote one of his Rhode Island correspondents that he had received "papers Relative to Captain Hulls Misfortune[s] which Are many and various. . . . I Don't know no More then the Man in the Moon how In Justice they Ought to be settled." As

[39] Malbone, August 16, 1762; Southwick and Clark, August 9, 1762, August 3, 1762.

[40] Jackson, October 19, 1761; Malbone, October 10, 1761.

[41] Townsend, March 29, 1762; Wickham and Malbone, April 7, 1762; Trevett, May 5, 1763.

[42] See William Gow, *Marine Insurance* (London: Macmillan, 1913), *passim*, but especially sections on "Particular Average" and "General Average." Discussion of the cases referred to begins on page 292.

the difficulties in this case deepened Gerard asserted that he would "any time Rather give up my Commission" than negotiate settlement of another average loss case; he earnestly hoped his principals in this case would come to New York themselves to deal with the underwriters whose "Extreem" exactness was a principal cause of Gerard's unhappiness, but the Rhode Islanders continued to rely upon him.[43]

Marine insurance among Gerard's colleagues at times bore considerable resemblance to gambling. Shippers and shipowners habitually tried to order their insurance by vessels which their own shipment or ship had a chance of beating to port, thus enabling the insurance to be "saved." Underwriters, being of similar spirit, usually only increased the premium if the order for insurance came to hand some time after the ship or shipment itself should have arrived. Thus in 1747 Gerard found a premium of 30% required instead of the promised 18% because it was revealed that the ship was overdue.[44] In 1762 60% was asked to insure a Rhode Island vessel overdue from Port au Prince although "Messrs. Crugers" had given 55% ten days before on a vessel which had left the same port at the same time. The "new Office" would not insure the risk at any premium, however.[45] In different circumstances in the same year Gerard successfully played upon the "Jealousy of the Different Offices" to obtain insurance although he had thought none of them would "Care to fix a premium" because of the news that two enemy privateers were off the Virginia coast.[46]

That the gambling instinct of the underwriters had its limits is illustrated, however, by other incidents. In 1749 Gerard felt that the rates offered by both London and New York underwriters indicated that "they do not Chuse to write"

[43] Southwick and Clark, August 27, 1762, September 17, 1762, October 25, 1762, January 18, 1763, March 31, 1763. See also Townsend, August 3, 1762; Malbone, May 20, 1762.

[44] Thurston, December 24, 1747. See also Gerard's letter to Snell, July 14, 1749, answering the complaint of London underwriters against him on this score.

[45] Townsend, April 19, 1762, April 20, 1762, May 6, 1762. Earlier all underwriters had refused to consider writing a policy because the ship was overdue (March 29, 1762).

[46] Malbone, August 16, 1762.

on voyages to the Bay of Honduras.[47] Similarly in 1761 the New York offices did "not incline to Insure at Any rate to the Mississippi."[48] Perhaps the most serious charge against the sporting spirit of the underwriters, however, is that they feared to insure against the risk of "English Custom house Officers." Several contracts Beekman made in 1762 on what were presumably smuggling voyages were to apply against all risks but that one and in 1763 he noted that the underwriters would insure against the seas and the Spaniards at 7½%, but "None of our Ounderwiters Care to Insure All Risques from the Cape [François]."[49]

Although his letters give no evidence of it, Gerard's account book indicates that he himself engaged in underwriting at least during the years 1756 and 1757.[50] In a period of about a year and a half then, Gerard made forty-five insurance contracts. The fact that these contracts are not mentioned in his correspondence suggests strongly that those he insured were all local residents or that Gerard was merely accepting additional risks farmed out by underwriters who had more business than they chose to be responsible for themselves.[51] The contracts were usually for either £100 or £50, more often the former than the latter. Premiums ranged from a low of 5% (to Halifax) to highs of 25% (to Hamburg) and 30% (to St. Kitts). More than half of the contracts involved voyages to or from the Caribbean area, but in addition to the ports mentioned above the destinations of the insured voyages included Amsterdam, London, Bristol, Southern coastal areas, Africa, and Madeira. Quite a number of the voyages either originated or terminated in ports other than New York, *e.g.*, New London, Elizabeth, New Milford, Rhode Island, and Philadelphia. Among the forty-five contracts there were two losses of £100, two of £50, and one damage payment of about £15. This left Gerard a profit of £178 on his premiums of £494.

[47] Thurston, November 20, 1749.

[48] Townsend, December 4, 1761.

[49] Malbone, January 18, 1762, February 8, 1763; Champlin, January 25, 1762; Southwick and Clark, April 6, 1762.

[50] Daybook, 297–98.

[51] Beekman's friend Richard Sharpe was one of the men in charge of the "Old Insurance Office" (Harrington, 15, 154). He may have directed some business to Gerard.

That Gerard may have remained in the underwriting business for some time after 1757 (when his account book terminates) is suggested by an incident of 1760. In that year a Rhode Island correspondent asked Gerard on what terms he could obtain insurance for him against loss on 500 lottery tickets. Gerard replied: "I dont know of any person in Town that . . . will Insure Any but my Self." He then set forth his complicated terms and volunteered the information that on seemingly less favorable terms he had lost £80 the summer before by insuring 400 tickets for the managers of "the brunswick Lottery."[52] Surely such a spirit would have won him considerable business in the marine insurance field.

By and large, however, the evidence indicates that Gerard's insurance business, both as agent and as underwriter, was largely a wartime affair. His agency service began during King George's War but died out after that to return in volume only during the French and Indian War. It dropped off again at the conclusion of that struggle. The underwriting of which we have record took place only in 1756 and 1757. This suggests that in peacetime when profits as well as risks were lower the merchants may have preferred as did Gerard in 1760 to do their own underwriting. With capital abundant relative to investment opportunity in the dull times of peace, Rhode Island underwriters may also have been better able to compete with those in New York. In any case there is little evidence that Gerard concerned himself with the insurance business save in time of war.

Investment in shipping was almost inevitable at one time or another for the colonial merchant, especially if he engaged, as Beekman so often did, in arbitrage. When shipping was scarce in boom periods the advantage of course lay with the ship-owning merchant who could usually act more speedily than his non-ship-owning rival upon discovering price disparities within his trading orbit. The non-ship-owning merchant

[52] Fowler, June 23, 1760. Gerard had bought fifty tickets himself in the lottery his correspondent inquired about. Mr. William Sachs, who has examined commercial material for the period in archives throughout the Northeast, has found much additional evidence of Beekman's underwriting activity.

might find himself charged exorbitant freight rates or completely deprived of space at the whim of the ship-owning merchant; he might also find that his goods had been shipped on deck where they would be exposed to a variety of hazards. He might in fact lose business opportunities because he could find no vessel bound for the port to which he desired to ship.[53] In addition to these competitive advantages for the ship-owning merchant, there was of course the prospect of freight revenues as a major incentive to invest in shipping. Furthermore the investment required to attain these advantages, thanks to the custom of spreading the risk among several owners, was comparatively small.[54] On the other hand the desirability of ship-owning was not a constant economic factor. Its advantages were heightened in prosperity as previously suggested, but were especially great in wartime due to the opportunities afforded by privateering and sophisticated smuggling in flag-of-truce operations. The advantages were much less in depressed times when freight was scarce and many vessels competed for it.

Although Gerard's investments in shipping antedate his letterbook (see Chapter 7), it is evident that he also gained valuable experience in the shipping field, as he had in insurance, by acting as agent for friends in Rhode Island. In 1746, for example, Gerard represented the owners and the captain and crew of a Rhode Island privateer in complicated negotiations for the distribution and sale of the cargo of a prize ship brought in by their vessel and two others.[55] In 1747 he worked hard to

[53] See the section on the shipping problem in Chapter VII. See also on exorbitant freight rates, Cunningham, January 17, 1753; Schoals, January 27, 1755; on being denied space, Cunningham, January 17, 1753; Bellew, January 29, 1754; Thurston, December 7, 1748; on deck shipment, Lloyd, April 5, 1756; on lost business, Miller, February 14, 1752; Marshall, January 31, 1757.

[54] Gerard paid less than £100 each for one-fourth shares in several vessels (Daybook, *passim*). He cited prices of £450, £640, and £900 respectively for three "old" ships sold in 1748 when he thought vessels were very cheap (Channing, August, 23, 1748).

[55] Vernon and White, July 18, 1746, another letter dated only "August," 1746, September 10, 1746; Duncan, October 25, 1746, December 20, 1746; also letters to "Gentlemen," September 10, 1746, December 20, 1746. See also Chapter VII for an account of Gerard's services to Irish ship-owners.

fill out the crew of another Rhode Island privateer[56] and exerted himself still more in attempting to obtain for other correspondents in Rhode Island prisoners of war for intended flag-of-truce ships.[57] He also provided ammunition, some provisions, insurance, and a pilot to Sandy Hook for the Philadelphia-bound vessel of another Rhode Islander.[58] Gerard continued to perform such services as these through 1748, when he also advised a prospective ship-purchaser in Rhode Island on the offerings of the New York market,[59] but after the conclusion of King George's War Gerard's letters show little of this kind of service except that which we have seen in the insurance field.[60] Perhaps he felt that he had learned his lessons.

While Gerard served as agent for Rhode Island shippers he did not neglect his own investments in the shipping business. One of his early capital expenditures in the field was for the construction of a sloop. He ordered cloth for its sails from London in February 1747, when the ship was already "building."[61] Early in October he wrote to Rhode Island for anchors and guns; he indicated also that he had previously ordered a mast there and that he expected to launch the vessel in about one more month.[62] Dissatisfied with the Rhode Island terms on guns and informed that they were cheap in Boston, he later sent a conditional order for them to a correspondent in that port,[63] but there is no evidence as to where he actually got the guns in the end. Gerard's subsequent references to the sloop are very few; they seem to indicate, however, that its maiden voyage for Newry and Liverpool which commenced on or about January 23, 1748, bore no cargo of Gerard's, but only

[56] Malbone and Vernon, June 23, 1747, June 7, 1748; White, June 24, 1747, August 6, 1747; Thurston, March 29, 1748, September 3, 1748; Freebody, June 7, 1748; Carr, October 25, 1748.

[57] Thurston, September 4, 1747, October 5, 1747, November 29, 1747, December 2, 1747; Channing, September 4, 1747, October 5, 1747, November 4, 1747, June 29, 1748. See Harrington, 266, 308–9, on the practices of flag-of-truce ships.

[58] Channing, October 5, 1747.

[59] See note 54.

[60] During the Seven Years' War Gerard represented Rhode Island ship-owners in a complicated prize case adjudicated at New York (Bowler, March 16, 1761, May 4, 1761, May 18, 1761, June 8, 1761, July 1, 1761, July 21, 1761).

[61] Burroughs, February 7, 1746.

[62] Thurston, October 5, 1747.

[63] Greenleaf, October 13, 1747.

freight, probably flaxseed.[64] Next year Gerard mentioned in a letter to London that he expected to write soon for insurance on a sloop to Madeira,[65] but he did not. In fact his letters give no indication of what happened to the vessel.

While his sloop was under construction Gerard had also maintained other investments in shipping. One of these was his one-sixth interest in the ship *Four Brothers*, the first of the two ships in which Gerard had an interest which were lost in the flaxseed trade.[66] Before its loss, however, the *Four Brothers* had completed at least one voyage to London and another to Ireland. It had been diverted from the London trade because it arrived in New York in the fall of 1746 only after two rival vessels which had gobbled up the available freight.[67] Another investment in the fall of 1746 dispatched the sloop *Little David* to Jamaica where the captain was to sell both ship and cargo for cash.[68] Another sloop, old, "Small and no Ways Sightly," was sent forth in a similar manner in 1748. This time Gerard would have preferred to let the resident merchant to whom he consigned his portion of the cargo sell the ship as well, but he had to grant that commission-carrying privilege to the captain in order to induce him to undertake the voyage.[69] That Gerard contemplated still another shipping investment is suggested by his expressed hope in reference to the captain of the Jamaican voyage that "it will be in my and my friends power to Procure him a better Vessell, so that . . . next season . . . he may be sent . . . [to Ireland and England] with a freight from hence."[70] This reference was probably to the snow *Good Intent* which left for Ireland in February 1749 under a different captain; the rejected seafarer could not have complained too long, however, for this was the second of Gerard's two vessels for Ireland to be lost at sea.[71] A sixth shipping interest of

[64] See Beckwith, January 7, 1748; Helms, January 23, 1748.

[65] Snell, January 20, 1749. Gerard made several Caribbean shipments about this time, but there is no conclusive evidence that he owned any portion of any of the vessels employed.

[66] See Chapter VII.

[67] Burroughs, November 20, 1746.

[68] Taylor, October 25, 1746.

[69] Collins, February 3, 1748, February 5, 1748; Thong, February 3, 1748.

[70] Beckwith, January 7, 1748.

[71] Helms, February 27, 1749. See also Snell, January 20, 1749.

Gerard's earliest years in business lay in the brig *Revenge* which set forth for Africa on January 18, 1749, but the history of this voyage belongs to another chapter.

With the conclusion of King George's War Gerard's interest in ship-owning declined rapidly. He may have been discouraged by the loss of two vessels in the Irish trade, but a factor of greater importance in all probability was the slow-down of commerce. In September 1748, Gerard wrote that "Wee have Now upwards of 40 Sails of Vessells in Our harbour now [*sic*] that must Long for freight." Flour was so scarce at that time, wrote Gerard, that his own half-loaded sloop had not taken on eight barrels in ten days despite promises of freight from eight or ten people.[72] "Ouer harbour is full of Vessells," he wrote again shortly afterward, "and nothing to Load them with."[73] The shortage of provisions was of course only a short-term phenomenon, but Gerard's disenchantment with ship-owning lasted longer. Not only do his letters from 1749 through 1753 give no evidence of new investment in the ownership of vessels; they seem to indicate also that he had liquidated his old interests. Furthermore, in 1752 when Gerard found "Every Branch of Trade is now Stagnated" he consoled his brother William on the poor price for which William's ship had sold by suggesting that even so disadvantageous a sale was "better . . . then to have keep her picking your Pockits Every voyage."[74]

In order during the depressed years between the two wars against France to provide himself some of the advantages of ship-owning without the disadvantage of depreciation in idleness Gerard frequently resorted to the hiring of vessels for particular voyages. He complained of losing money when he hired a vessel for Rhode Island in 1750,[75] but later that year a large flaxseed order for Dublin and the refusal of all ships in New York to accept freight for that port induced Gerard in conjunction with Robert Livingston to hire a vessel for the

[72] Channing, September 6, 1748.
[73] Thurston, September 23, 1748.
[74] William Beekman, June 6, 1752.
[75] Edgel, September 10, 1750; Gilbert, September 24, 1750.

voyage.[76] In 1752 Gerard again hired a vessel for Rhode Island[77] and another for Boston.[78] Early in 1754 he announced to a Rhode Island friend his intention of hiring a vessel "to keep in your trade."[79] Later letters seem to indicate, however, that he succeeded only for a short time, if at all, and that one of his purposes was the avoidance of customs duties—a task rendered much easier by having the captain subject to his orders.[80] His daybook also indicates that Gerard lost £17 that year on a quarter-interest in a ship hired for Providence.[81] That the idea nevertheless retained some charm is suggested by the fact that in the following year when he had hired a sloop for Georgia Gerard invited his correspondent there to join with him in keeping the sloop in service between them. The scheme did not work out, however, for in 1756 we find Gerard pondering how to collect money due him in Georgia when no New York ships were bound for that place. He discarded the idea of hiring another ship himself because it would be too expensive and dangerous in view of the existing glut of provisions on the Georgia market and the absence of specific advice.[82] Although there are indications that Gerard hired at least one vessel for Boston in 1755,[83] there is no evidence of any attempt to regularize the arrangement with his correspondent there. During the wartime prosperity Gerard seems to have hired no vessels save a snow which he, Franklin, and some others chartered to carry flaxseed to Newry on their own accounts in February 1758, when the scarcity of that commodity in America seemed to augur well for its price in Ireland.[84]

The development of the crisis which led to the Seven Years' War reawakened Gerard's desire to invest in the ownership of vessels. His daybook reveals that between the end of 1753

[76] Snell, November 13, 1750; Henderson, December 4, 1750.

[77] Fowler, July 28, 1752.

[78] Berjeau, July 31, 1752.

[79] Fowler, January 26, 1754.

[80] Fowler, April 2, 1754, April 29, 1754.

[81] Daybook, 343–4. The cost of hiring the vessel and paying wages was £15, cargo £84, outfit £7. Income was only £90 as against £107 in expenses.

[82] Powell, May 30, 1755, February 27, 1756. See also November 19, 1756.

[83] Lloyd, November 13, 1755.

[84] Schoals, February 16, 1758; Carlile, February 17, 1758; Hodgson, same date; Barclay, same date.

and the middle of 1756 Gerard had shares in at least six merchant vessels: the *Liverpool* which went to St. Croix and Barbados, the *Sarah and Ann* which went to Hispaniola, Cape Fear, South Carolina, Tortola, and St. Eustatius (7 voyages in all), the *Little Garry* which went to Hispaniola, Cape Fear and St. Eustatius (6 voyages), the *Priscilla* to Hispaniola and Jamaica (2 voyages), the *Ann* to Cayenne (twice), the *Olive* to Hispaniola once and Jamaica twice. Profits on these ships, according to Gerard's calculations, were very small or non-existent save in the case of the *Little Garry*, which in six voyages, three of them to Cape Fear, earned the modest net income of £115.[85]

Supplementing this testimony of Gerard's daybook are scattered references in his letters. His rush order to Rhode Island for two anchors, February 16, 1755, suggests that Gerard may then have been involved again in the building of a vessel.[86] But when, at the end of 1755, his Cayenne vessel proved "unfit for [further] service" Gerard felt disinclined to invest in another ship and so offered to sell his credits there to a Rhode Islander still engaged in trading to that distant port.[87] That he had not retired from the field is clear, however, from a letter of 1760 in which Gerard cited as one of his reasons for declining an invitation to purchase a share in a Rhode Island vessel the fact that he had recently bought shares in three flag-of-truce ships.[88] Four months later he stated that he had shares in no fewer than seven such ships which had gone to Hispaniola.[89] Also in 1760 Gerard joined John Van Horne as co-owner of a ship dispatched to Belfast with flaxseed and provisions.[90] Rendered more cautious by the unhappy outcome of many of these voyages, by the decline in business which was evident in 1761, as well as by his mistrust of Connecticut people, Gerard was reluctant then to accept a share in a

[85] Daybook, 309–10, 335–6, 341–6, 355–6. *Little Garry* was ordered sold at St. Eustatius (Montgomery, April 8, 1756).

[86] Fowler, February 16, 1755.

[87] Fowler, December 6, 1755.

[88] Bowler, February 14, 1760.

[89] William Beekman, June 14, 1760.

[90] Bradshaw and Alexander, February 29, 1760, March 14, 1760, March 24. 1760.

voyage from Connecticut to South Carolina, but did so at length on the assurance, which he secretly checked, that the undertaking had been insured in London.[91] After 1761 Beekman's letters do not indicate that he invested at all in merchant shipping.

The flag-of-truce ventures, casually mentioned above, are given little discussion in Gerard's letters, except for the period of King George's War. Then Gerard wrote in some detail of such operations in reporting to the Rhode Island merchants for whom he acted as agent,[92] but he himself was "not so Lucky as to have any Trade" of that variety.[93] He almost became involved in such a venture late in 1747 when he acted as intermediary between Rhode Islanders who had governmental authorization for a flag-of-truce voyage if they could get prisoners and New Yorkers who had prisoners but could get no authorization for a flag-of-truce voyage.[94] The effort apparently aborted, however, for the subject simply disappears from Gerard's correspondence.

In the Seven Years War Gerard's agency services for Rhode Islanders do not appear at all; he invested in flag-of-truce vessels in his own interest, but found few occasions to write about such investments in his letterbook. In 1760 he mentioned his interest in seven "flags" only to complain to his brother that three of four en route home from Hispaniola had "already" been seized by men-of-war; he feared they would be condemned and that he would lose £2,000 by them.[95] One month later he observed to a Rhode Islander that "The Sloop I was afraid of [apparently the fourth en route from Hispaniola] is taken and Carried to Jamaica where she will be Condemned bodily. I say dam them all."[96] His other flag-of-truce ships may have made out better; at least their fate prompted no outraged comments in the letterbook, although two years later (May 1762) Gerard observed that "Our Sugar Trad is Entirely

[91] Barclay, August 15, 1761.

[92] See references cited above.

[93] Channing, November 17, 1747.

[94] Thurston, November 29, 1747, December 2, 1747.

[95] William Beekman, June 14, 1760.

[96] Townsend, July 14, 1760. See Pares, 454–5, or Harrington, 309, for an explanation of the probable fate of Gerard's vessels and the reason for his indignation.

Ruined. Everything that Comes In from Hispaniola etc is taken by the Man-of-War or her Tender at the Hook or in the Sound."[97]

In privateering Gerard's experience was somewhat similar. During King George's War he made no investments of his own,[98] but commented extensively on privateering in letters to Rhode Island privateer-owners who employed him to represent them at New York. During the Seven Years War such agency services were very few and his own investments numerous but little discussed. The daybook indicates that by 1757 Gerard had netted £185 on an investment of only £177 in the privateer *Hercules*.[99] He wrote at great length to James Childs of Philadelphia about insurance of £100 on his interest in the *Prince Edward*, and made clear at the same time that Childs had also obtained, in a more satisfactory manner, insurance for Gerard's interest in another privateer, the *Abercrombe*.[100] A letter to his brother in Liverpool which cited the glorious profit record of the *Harlequin* concluded anti-climactically: "I have Part of four Privateers and have but Little Success."[101] Some success was apparent, however, in 1760 when Gerard began in behalf of himself and the other captors of the Dutch ship *Dageraad* (also *De Dageroed*), which sold with its cargo for £7,336, a lengthy correspondence relating to the unsuccessful appeal which the ship's owners made to London from its condemnation in New York.[102] In the last years of the war Gerard's only mention of privateering concerns his rejected offer to purchase from a hard-pressed Rhode Islander certain prize claims which faced protracted

[97] Townsend, May 6, 1762.

[98] An exception of sorts was Gerard's "grub-staking" of three crew members of a privateer in exchange for a quarter-share in the prospective prize shares of each (Thong, February 14, 1748).

[99] Daybook, 293–4.

[100] Childs, November 21, 1757.

[101] William Beekman, November 25, 1757.

[102] Mico, August 29, 1760, March 23, 1761, June 6, 1761, December 27, 1761. The ruling in this case affirmed the "Rule of 1756" which was so long at issue in international law. See Harrington, 306; Thomas A. Bailey, *Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950), 109.

negotiation and perhaps litigation before they could be liquidated.[103]

The pattern of Gerard's shipping investments can be quickly summarized. He plunged into the field in his early years; he relied to some extent on experience gained by acting as New York representative for correspondents in Rhode Island. Between the two wars against France he tended to rely to a considerable extent upon the hiring of vessels, a device which proved useful enough to be employed on special occasions during the wartime prosperity. During the war years Gerard invested quite heavily in merchant shipping, flag-of-truce vessels, and privateers, but in no case was he spectacularly successful, a fact which may have contributed as much as did the generally dull times after the war to Gerard's later disinterest in this field of investment. Basically, however, Gerard was not much interested in any business after the war; he wanted to retire and live graciously.

In addition to maintaining business interests in flaxseed, indigo, insurance, and shipping during the Seven Years War, Gerard also managed to act as agent for the Colony of Rhode Island in supplying the forces which the Colony contributed to the military campaigns on the New York frontier. The records of this relationship are fragmentary, but even so they picture an unusual liaison.

There is no indication of why Beekman was selected for this agency, but some reasons may be deduced. In the first place, as we have already seen, Gerard had numerous business contacts in Rhode Island. No doubt his friends intereceded in his behalf. Secondly, in case it became necessary, as it did, for the Rhode Island government to make payment in commodities, Gerard was well qualified by experience to dispose as

[103] Bours, March 28, 1763. Mr. James Lydon, who has made an extensive study of privateering in the late colonial period, has found additional material on Gerard's privateering ventures. He finds that in 1759 Gerard gained £266 as his one-sixteenth share in prizes of the *Prince Edward* in which he had invested £100. The *General Abercrombie* (see text) took six prizes valued at £9,820, but what share of this Beekman received is not known. Beekman also owned a portion of the *New Harlequin* which late in the war took three prizes valued at £19,125, but again there is no evidence as to Beekman's share.

profitably as possible of the items available in Rhode Island. There is no indication that Gerard had to engage in the various forms of bribery to which Thomas Hancock was forced to resort in order to obtain a far more lucrative contract from the British government in the preceding war.[104]

The initial episode in the agency relationship occurred in conjunction with the Albany Congress of 1754. The Rhode Island delegate, Martin Howard, Jr., apparently required more money than had been provided for his stay. Accordingly he drew a bill on his government for which Col. John Henry Lydius, a prominent frontiersman, advanced him funds. To repay the obligation the Rhode Island treasurer sent Gerard four hogsheads of rum. Gerard sold the rum for cash which he then forwarded to the Mayor of Albany, apparently Lydius's agent, who was to return the receipted bill which Gerard would then send to Rhode Island.[105] This cumbersome pattern was employed throughout the Seven Years War in supplying Rhode Island forces on the New York frontier.

The services which Gerard performed for Rhode Island, although limited because of the presence in New York of a committee of Rhode Islanders upon whom the government naturally preferred to rely, were quite varied in nature. They began in the spring of 1755, when preparations were in progress for the Crown Point expedition.[106] After formally accepting the offer to act as agent for Rhode Island,[107] Gerard promptly busied himself in obtaining and having transported to Albany provisions, maps, "Phamplits" [pamphlets], and sixty batteaux with paddles and poles to supply the 400 men Rhode Island had agreed to contribute to the expedition.[108] These expendi-

[104] Baxter, *op. cit.*, Chapter VII.

[105] Richardson, August 22, 1754; Daybook, 121; Gertrude S. Kimball (ed.), *The Correspondence of the Colonial Governors of Rhode Island, 1723–1775* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1903), II, 195, note 2; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 396; *Doc. Rel.*, VI, 860.

[106] See Gipson, VI, 131 *ff.*

[107] War Committee, May 20, 1755.

[108] War Committee, May 20, 1755, June 2, 1755, June 9, 1755; Daybook, 289–92, 303–5, 307–8, 317–22; Gipson, VI, 139, states that each batteau was to carry five men; yet Rhode Island ordered only sixty for its forces which were to number 400.—See John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, V (Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co., 1860), 419. Cited hereafter as *Rhode Island Records.*

tures plus an advance of £200 to be drawn on by the commissary of the Rhode Island forces at Albany put the Colony in Gerard's debt to the extent of £712 in 1755.[109] In 1756 Gerard supported the plea of Governor Hopkins for the exemption of shipments by the Rhode Island government from the import duty imposed by New York on rum; he scoured American markets in search of blankets for the Rhode Island troops; he represented the Committee of War in negotiations for the purchase of muskets;[110] he expedited the transmission to Rhode Island of six chests of silver and one of gold, valued together at £7,000 sterling, which Parliament had awarded in remuneration for the Colony's efforts in the campaign of 1755.[111] He also advanced funds as before to the Colony's representatives, most often by purchasing in New York bills of exchange on Albany which he then endorsed to the Commissary of the Rhode Island forces. For this year (1756) his expenditures on the Colony's account were about £1,400, New York money.[112] After 1756 Gerard's records give little evidence of the services he rendered, although his employment continued into 1764.

Gerard's terms for his services were very simple. He stated in his letter of acceptance, "If I am furnished with Cash and good Sterling Bills on London shall Charge five Per Cent for Laying out the Same for necessarys and to such uses as the Committee Shall se Cause to Direct. If I Received Effects Shall Charge Seven and Half per Cent for Storeage and Sales, (no Commission for Laying of it out)." He expected interest for sums advanced "Untill Such Times I am reimbursted."[113] That there was no deviation from these terms is made clear in Gerard's letter of 1761 to a prospective customer to whom he offered the same terms. He observed then that he had been allowed interest when in advance £400 or £500 on the Colony account and that Rhode Island "Readily paid me 7½ per Cent for selling their Effect[s] and Remitting the money to their

[109] Champlin, July 26, 1755; *Rhode Island Records*, V, 422, 431; Daybook, as cited in note 108.

[110] War Committee, April 19, 1756, April 24, 1756, November 17, 1756.

[111] War Committee, November 18, 1756; Kimball, *op. cit.*, II, 236; Gipson, VII, 313.

[112] Daybook, pages cited in note 108.

[113] War Committee, May 20, 1755.

Commissary." He had done business for Rhode Island on these terms, he said, "more or Less the Whole Warr."[114]

As Gerard's observation of 1761 suggests, Rhode Island had seldom found it expedient to remit cash or bills of exchange on London but had usually sent him instead "effects." In his acceptance letter of 1755 Gerard had asserted that he could not recommend anything better than good bills of exchange or milled dollars for remittance to New York, but if these were not to be had, as he was probably quite sure they were not, he suggested "the best Jamaica Molasses" as a remittance which "Commands Cash sooner then Rum."[115] In 1755 the Rhode Islanders were able to send molasses which sold for £681, but after that the standard remittance was rum.[116] That this was not the scarcest of commodities is evident from Gerard's assertion upon receiving a shipment from the Colony in 1756 that the British, New York and New Jersey troops were supplied for six months, that great quantities were arriving daily from the West Indies, and that so much had been taken to Albany that it sold there for prime cost, if it could be sold at that.[117] Gerard also found cause to complain on occasion of the gaging and of the proof of the rum sent him.[118]

Such "Effects" were not the only means by which Gerard was paid, however, for in 1760, pressed for funds himself, he forestalled another rum shipment by drawing upon the Committee of War to pay one of his Rhode Island creditors. He excused his action by insisting that there was then nothing they could send to New York for sale "with out Lossing 10 per Cent and upwards."[119] On the other hand in 1764 the Committee refused to honor a small draft of Gerard's despite previous assurances by one of its members that the draft would be paid. Gerard wrote somewhat bitterly on this occasion that he had had "more Trouble then Proffits the several years past with the Committees business."[120] He had no more such troubles, however, for the relationship ended in that year.

[114] Fitch, May 4, 1761.
[115] War Committee, May 20, 1755.
[116] Daybook, pages cited in note 108.
[117] War Committee, April 19, 1756.
[118] War Committee, May 31, 1756, July 29, 1755.
[119] War Committee, February 14, 1760.
[120] Fowler, November 5, 1764.

9

DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS INTERESTS

A Geographical View

MUCH OF Gerard's business refuses to be categorized under such simple headings as flaxseed, indigo, insurance, and government contracting. Especially in his younger days Gerard was quite prone, as were most of his fellow merchants, to seek trade in any item with anybody anywhere, if market conditions seemed to offer prospect of profit. Because market conditions for the many products in the many areas within his trading orbit changed frequently, Gerard's pattern of imports and exports was in constant flux. For this reason certain aspects of Gerard's business are best approached by describing in summary fashion his contacts with each of the many geographical areas with which he dealt.

Gerard's business with the mother country was less considerable than one might imagine. Apart from his small importations of indigo, Gerard imported virtually nothing from England for sale in New York. This is explained largely by the poor success of his few experimental efforts in the dry goods trade.

There were three periods in which Gerard attempted dry goods ventures. At the very outset of his career during the prosperous days of King George's War Gerard imported a small quantity from London. Despite having received unsalable "old Shop goods" on this occasion,[1] Gerard soon arranged to receive more dry goods from another merchant. Some were to

[1] Burroughs, November 20, 1746, September 26, 1747.

be sold on commission; some came on his own account.[2] In July, 1748 he confessed that he felt "great Inclination to Enter into the Dry good buissiness."[3] As the postwar depression set in during 1749, however, circumstances altered his inclination. In July of that year he wrote that two thirds of his original importation of 1746 was still unsold and that dry goods generally were selling for 125% "which must yeial but Small Proffits."[4] By November the rate had fallen to 100% and Gerard expected it to sink to 80% by spring.[5] He spoke no more of entering the dry goods trade until another war had brought a return of prosperity.

In 1759 Gerard dispatched a considerable quantity of "best White powder Sugars" of questionable origin to his brother in Liverpool with instructions to remit the proceeds in the best quality dry goods which he intended to sell by the bale.[6] Again misfortune followed. When the goods were received Gerard had to sell them for 95% in order to raise cash. Furthermore, having paid in advance for his goods, Gerard was terribly distressed that Walter Franklin had been charged *lower* prices for comparable goods from Liverpool at nine months credit. He demanded that his brother secure an abatement on the price and the customary 5% reduction for cash payment, but there is no indication as to whether or not his demands were granted. On the whole enterprise "out and home" he reported that he would clear but £10 in New York money, "which," he added, "Intirely Curse [cures] me from Ordering any More" as he had intended.[7]

He hoped to do better on a similar venture directed at the same time to London under the management of a New York ship's captain. The order to the captain, that he bring no dry

[2] Shaw and Snell (or Snell alone), January 7, 1748, July 5, 1748, November 1, 1748, June 3, 1749.

[3] Shaw and Snell, July 5, 1748.

[4] Snell, July 1749. In colonial parlance to sell an item at 125% meant at 225% of the sterling invoice figure. With exchange at about 180% (Harrington, 108) the markup was only 25% (see Chapter IX, note 6).

[5] Snell, November 16, 1749.

[6] William Beekman, December 20, 1759.

[7] William Beekman, June 14, 1760. See note 4. That he could clear £10 is explained by a small profit on the sale of the sugar and by the fact that exchange was only 160% (Harrington, 109).

goods in case peace appeared likely, suggests that Gerard had not forgotten his earlier experience.[8] There is no indication of the outcome of this London venture, but the fact that it was not repeated is significant.

The last of Gerard's experiments in the dry goods trade began about 1769. The non-importation movement protesting the Townshend Duties was then in effect and had resulted in a sharp decline in the exchange rate. Regarding this as too good an opportunity to miss Gerard and his partners sent several bills to London agents with orders for dry goods to be shipped upon repeal of the duties.[9] Gerard's letterbook terminates before the outcome of this enterprise had become clear, but the pervading glut of dry goods in New York following the abandonment of non-importation in 1770 makes it highly unlikely that Gerard did any better this time than he had in his previous attempts, if indeed his correspondent had been able to send any dry goods at all under the cautious specifications included in his instructions.[10]

Gerard's exports to England were almost as infrequent as his imports from the seat of empire. In 1750 when he was stuck with some low-grade rum which could be sold in New York only at great risk to his reputation Gerard chose to export his misfortune to London, perhaps because that was one of the relatively few accessible markets within the empire's western reaches which he did not frequently ply. Whatever his rationalization he lost money.[11] At the same time Gerard's London correspondent asked that wheat be shipped from New York to Cadiz on his account. This would have given Gerard a credit in London but the order went unfilled because the price at New

[8] William Beekman, June 14, 1760; Davis, December 20, 1759, January 30, 1760.

[9] Blackburn, November 30, 1769, December 2, 1769, February 12, 1770; Sargeant & Chambers, January 5, 1770; Bower, January 5, 1770.

[10] The instructions in the letters cited (note 9) called for the return of "half Joannis" in case the revenue acts were not repealed in time for spring shipment. Gerard had by this time formed a partnership with his son and a man named Gould; the partners may have decided to trade in dry goods. For a discussion of James Beekman's conduct in a similar situation at the same time, see Chapter XIII.

[11] Snell, January 9, 1750, January 31, 1750, June 12, 1750, August 2, 1750.

York was too high.[12] In 1753 when Gerard received the account on the sale of some lignumvitae which he had sent to London, he acknowledged it with the comment: "a misarable account it was."[13] These few trials and the disappointing adventures to Liverpool and London with sugar in 1759 and 1760 apparently discouraged whatever inclination Gerard may have had to trade further with England.

Despite the paucity of his commodity exchanges with England, the mother country did assume an important place in Gerard's business. In large measure this was due to the flaxseed trade which provided Gerard the credits in London against which he drew bills of exchange to sell in New York. It was against such credits also that he ordered personal and household items from London. Such credits, too, enabled him to authorize the Madeira merchants who supplied his fine wine to draw for payment upon London firms.[14] Gerard's occasional orders for insurance policies to be made in London were paid for in the same way and it was relationships growing out of the flaxseed trade which made it possible for Gerard to play international banker in two minor instances not directly related to the flaxseed business as well as to collect from an evasive Connecticut debtor.[15]

[12] Snell, August 2, 1750.

[13] Scott, July 17, 1753. See also Scott, December 15, 1752.

[14] Barclay, January 15, 1759.

[15] In the ship-purchase Gerard in effect provided a letter of credit to an Irish ship captain who purchased the vessel on behalf of an Irish firm in which he was a partner. After considerable "shopping" the captain made his purchase in Boston. Gerard accepted and paid the bills of exchange which the captain drew to pay for the ship. Then Gerard reimbursed himself by drawing and selling at New York bills of exchange on the London agent of the Irish partnership.

Although his statements on the point are not clear, Gerard's income from the transaction was apparently 5 per cent interest on the sum for which the captain was authorized to draw from the time of that authorization until Gerard had repaid himself by selling the bills on London. It was customary at New York, he observed, to receive 5 per cent for advancing money and 2½ per cent for drawing bills. He omitted the latter charge because the sum upon which he was to receive interest was large. Still the purchasers were "unEasy" about the cost of Gerard's service, but he assured them that he had acted in conformity with local usages. Nesbitt, September 6, October 18, 1757; Walsh, October 10, 1757; Knoxs and Alcock, October 18, 1757, July 25, 1758.

On the legacy transfer, see Barclay, January 24, 1763. On the debt collection, see Barclay, July 4, 1763, October 30, 1765. See also Barclay, March 23, 1761.

Gerard's business with Ireland, as we have seen, was dominated by the flaxseed trade. He did of course send other commodities to Ireland both on commission and on his own account and he received Irish products to sell in New York also on his own account as well as on commission. All these transactions with Irish merchants were so closely related to the flaxseed trade, however, that they have been discussed in detail in Chapter VII.

Virtually all of Gerard's ventures to the northern outposts of Britain's American empire took place between 1750 and 1754[16] while the British were struggling to breathe life into the infant city of Halifax and with less success to assimilate the stubborn Acadians.[17] His first small venture to Halifax in 1750 Gerard consigned to a ship captain whose arrival in Halifax helped to make it possible for the hard-pressed Governor to resist the monopolistic pressures of two wealthy and influential Boston merchants, Apthorp and Hancock.[18] None of Gerard's letters for 1751 have survived, but he seems to have found prospects favorable, for in 1752 we find him writing to resident correspondents not only in Halifax but also in Annapolis Royal.

Nevertheless, at Halifax Gerard found problems more plentiful than profits. Contrary to instructions the ship captain employed in 1750 had come away without compensation for Gerard's goods which he left in strange hands.[19] Captain Isaac Sears of later political fame had little success in collecting these debts for Gerard in 1752 and the resident correspondent, John Codman, not only did little better,[20] but at the end of 1755 had still not rendered an account of the sale of sugar sent him in 1752. Furthermore, Codman could offer only his note for £100 sterling when Gerard's demands against him were pressed by Henry Lloyd at Boston whence Codman had ventured in 1755

[16] In 1748 Gerard sent off a unique shipment to Newfoundland consigned to a ship captain (Barker, September 13, 1748). It was a joint effort in conjunction with the other owners of the slave ship *Revenge*.

[17] See Gipson, V, Chapter Six.

[18] Barnes, February 23, 1750; Baxter, 122.

[19] See four letters, each bearing the date, August 8, 1752.

[20] Codman, March 12, 1752.

apparently in search of more supplies.[21] Despite these developing difficulties, Gerard sent indigo to Halifax in the fall of 1752 and a sloop-load of provisions in the fall of 1753, but the consignment in each case was to the captain rather than to Codman. The captain had instructions, if sales could not be completed, to leave the goods with John Butler.[22] The absence of subsequent letters to Butler or to other corrrespondents there suggests that nothing was left unpaid-for in Halifax; it suggests also that the sales had not been profitable.

With Annapolis Royal Gerard's relations were more satisfactory. They began in the spring of 1752 when an aggressive merchant named Daniel Dyson visited New York and imparted to Gerard his grandiose plans for monopolizing the supply of provisions to the troubled region where Acadian farmers were soon to aid him by effectively boycotting their English rulers. Impressed by the profit prospect at Annapolis Royal Gerard promptly purchased a one-third interest in a large cargo of wheat and corn bound for that port. He tried to arrange that the cargo be consigned to Dyson, but the ship captain had secured a prior commitment from the shippers that the entire cargo be consigned to him. Gerard contented himself with warning the captain that this would be his last cargo for Annapolis Royal unless he was hired to carry cargo for Dyson. Gerard's action was not without self-interest for he hoped to be half-owner of whatever provisions Dyson ordered from New York.[23]

Problems were not long in developing. First Dyson and his colleagues at Annapolis Royal would grant Gerard only one-third interest instead of the one-half he had expected. This Gerard reluctantly agreed to with some qualifications.[24] Then

[21] Wallice, April 22, 1754; Lloyd, December 2, 1754, July 21, 1755, November 3, 1755.

[22] Taylor, November 17, 1752; Spelling, October 16, 1753. Both letters express preference for payment in bills drawn by Mr. Saul or Mr. Mangres rather than by the Governor, some of whose bills had been refused by the authorities in London. See Baxter, 120–121.

[23] See Gipson, V, 204–5; Wimble, June 29, 1752; Dyson, June 30, 1752.

[24] Dyson, August 24, 1752.

it became apparent that nowhere near the quantity of grain which Dyson desired from the fall harvest would be available for shipment before the season of "Daingerous navigation" in Nova Scotian waters despite the fact that Gerard had scoured the countryside for sixty miles around in order to make contracts for early delivery wherever possible. Furthermore an important letter of instructions which Dyson entrusted to Isaac Sears disappeared somewhere between New York and the post office at that captain's home in Norwalk.[25] Dyson was annoyed, too, that Gerard, unable to fill the ship, had been obliged to permit the captain to accept other cargo consigned to himself instead of to Dyson.[26] Because of these disappointments Dyson declined to renew his orders for 1753 and when he sought to do so in 1754 Gerard explained in detail why he felt that he could not agree to advance all the money for the purchases as he had before.[27] There were some exchanges between the two on the usual commission basis, but Dyson's scheme for monopolizing the provision supply had failed.[28] After 1754 Gerard showed no more interest in Nova Scotia; military events of the next few years made it possible for New York provisions to find ample markets nearer home.

At the beginning of his career Gerard had a resident correspondent, Stephen Greenleaf, at Boston, but Greenleaf quickly dropped out of sight[29] leaving Gerard's few transactions with the Massachusetts metropolis temporarily to a number of ship captains. In 1752 Gerard sent quantities of provisions, glass and indigo to Boston and its environs entrusted to the care of such agents who were usually instructed to secure dollars or sterling bills in exchange.[30] In 1753, however, these ship captains began to be replaced by resident merchants, one of

[25] Dyson, November 12, 1752, November 22, 1752.

[26] Dyson, April 14, 1753.

[27] Dyson, April 14, 1753, March 4, 1754. Meanwhile Gerard had sent provisions to the area on his own account and instructed the ship captain to contract, if possible, for future deliveries. The latter effort failed and indeed some of the items sent were left with Dyson for sale (Brown, April 14, 1753; Dyson, June 24, 1753).

[28] Dyson, June 24, 1753, March 4, 1754, May 4, 1754.

[29] Greenleaf, August 11, 1746, December 22, 1746, March 17, 1747.

[30] Bennet, June 15, 1752; Conklin, June 23, 1752; Berjeau, July 31, 1752, May 25, 1753; Briggs, January 16, 1753.

whom in particular had ingratiated himself with Gerard by aiding one of the ship captains in the disposal of Gerard's goods.[31] By the middle of the year Gerard was writing frequently not only to that merchant, Gamaliel Wallice, but also to another Bostonian, John Rowe, and consigning no more cargo to ship captains.

Conditions were not then favorable for such trade, however. Informed of a Massachusetts import duty of 40/ per hogshead on rum Gerard altered his intention of sending that colonial necessity. He regretted that he had sent glass previously in ignorance of a duty which he feared would more than equal his profit margin.[32] In October 1753, he calculated that he had shipped the value of £1,000 (New York money) to Boston in eleven months and that he would be lucky to clear £10, "if I save myself." This, he added, "almost Discourages me Shiping any More your Way."[33]

Furthermore, Gerard's choice of agents had been inauspicious. John Rowe had returned in two shipments, instead of one as ordered, 4,000 pounds of the ginger which Gerard had previously sent him. Having contracted to deliver the whole 4,000 pounds on the arrival of the first ship, Gerard had to buy 2,000 pounds at an inflated figure to make good his contract. He was sure that a large consignment from the West Indies would deflate the price before the second half of his shipment arrived. Immediately after this fiasco, Gerard ordered all his affairs removed from Rowe's hands,[34] but their account was still in dispute some two years later.[35]

The ingratiating Gamaliel Wallice was hardly a better choice. In 1754 Gerard learned of disquieting rumors that Wallice had been jailed for inability to pay his debts. Actually the rumormongers had confused Gamaliel Wallice with his brother, but Gerard, feeling ill-used and knowing that "Large demands" against Gamaliel would soon be made by New Yorkers, acted to

[31] Wallice, August 24, 1752.
[32] Wallice, October 1, 1753.
[33] Wallice, October 22, 1753.
[34] Rowe, October 29, 1753.
[35] Lloyd, March 3, 1755.

secure himself. As late as 1756 he was still apprehensive about the sums which Wallice owed him.[36]

To replace these two agents and to represent Gerard in settling with them there appeared a transplanted New Yorker, Henry Lloyd.[37] Lloyd once annoyed Gerard by sending provisions of poor quality when a cash remittance had been asked for[38] and there were times when Gerard preferred to entrust to ship captains his consignments of provisions for the Boston area,[39] but the correspondence with Lloyd continued year in and year out. It ended in fact only in 1767 when Gerard was in semi-retirement. As early as 1756, however, Gerard had concluded that "its almost needness [*sic*] to attempt to hit your markit,"[40] and after that time Gerard's Boston letters, with some new correspondents as well as with Lloyd, dealt largely with debt-collections, transfers of funds, and insurance matters.[41]

It is very clear that a large part of Gerard's business, especially on the selling end, was with Connecticut. Unfortunately nearly all the transactions involved seem to have required no entry in his letterbook. The few letters to Connecticut which do appear fall for the most part into two groups. First are the letters to ship captains, notably Israel Boardman, who peddled various articles up and down the Connecticut River for Gerard in pursuit of flaxseed or, on at least one occasion, tobacco.[42] Undoubtedly many such voyages were undertaken upon instructions which were not set down in the letterbook. The second and larger group of letters concerned debt-collections. These letters were directed for the most part to William Samuel Johnson, the distinguished lawyer later to be President of

[36] Lloyd, November 4, 1754, November 11, 1754, February 2, 1756.

[37] See NYHS, *Collections 1926, 1927* [*Papers of the Lloyd Family* edited by Dorothy C. Barck] (New York: New York Historical Society, 1927), *passim*.

[38] Lloyd, July 5, 1755.

[39] Bennet, January 28, 1756; Caldwell, September 26, 1757.

[40] Lloyd, November 8, 1756.

[41] Hurd, May 16, 1753, June 6, 1763, July 18, 1763, January 9, 1764, January 22, 1764, February 21, 1764 (re. Hurd, see also Gouverneur, March 28, 1764); Jackson, November 5, 1761, February 1, 1762, May 31, 1762; Stoddard, February 2, 1763. Boston's small role in Beekman's flaxseed trade is discussed in Chapter VII.

[42] See Boardman, October 10, 1752, August 26, 1754, October 28, 1754; Bloomer, August 5, 1748.

Columbia College,[43] or to Joseph Chew, a highly influential merchant,[44] with whom Gerard also did some business. These two Gerard apparently exempted from his general condemnation of men from Connecticut.

The small ships which shuttled constantly between Rhode Island and New York transported a commerce which was almost the backbone of Gerard's business. The important contribution of Rhode Island correspondents to Gerard's shipping and insurance enterprises we have already noted, as we have the wartime contract with the Rhode Island government, but the central focus of Gerard's Rhode Island correspondence was on the commissioned exchange of products. There were well over a score of Rhode Islanders with whom Gerard carried on such exchanges. This was far more than the number of his correspondents in any other colony. This was also the correspondence which he began earliest and maintained most consistently to the end of his career. There can be little doubt that it was also the most remunerative.

The nature of the business was not complicated. Keeping close track of prices in the two areas Gerard would ship to Rhode Island whatever seemed to offer prospect of profit. His correspondent there would sell the product on commission and return payment in whatever form Gerard specified. A larger part of this business, however, especially in the later years, seems to have taken place with the roles reversed, or, in other words, with Gerard selling and purchasing as agent for Rhode Islanders. In so doing his terms probably varied little from those he set forth in 1765: 5% for sales, 2½% for remitting goods, 1% for remitting cash. Furthermore he would advance half the value of goods which he could not sell at once.[45]

[43] Johnson, February 20, 1754, December 2, 1754, December 9, 1754; Lewis, February 5, 1753.

[44] Chew, January 9, 1764, October 29, 1764, August 26, 1765.

[45] Ellery, October 30, 1765. Gerard's letter to Channing, February 8, 1749, suggests that Gerard lost that gentleman's business by hinting that he should receive 7½% instead of 5% but the situation is by no means clear. The letter does indicate, however, that commissions charged by New York merchants to their Rhode Island correspondents ranged as low as 3½% and as high as 12½%. Gerard would apparently have been content to keep his commission at 5% if Channing had not so often asked Gerard to advance money for him (Channing, December 19, 1748). See Harrington, 71–72, on general practices in charging commissions.

As in most businesses, however, these simple exchanges had a way of becoming more complicated. A fairly common difficulty was that encountered by Gerard on a consignment of cocoa from Samuel Fowler in which he had accepted an interest. "I am very Sorry You did not send Our Coco, before this time," wrote Gerard upon receiving the shipment in 1754, "for my house has been run down for it Last week and I might have got 6£5 [shillings] per Cent but Yesterday Arrived a Sloop from St. Eustatia with Ten thousand Weight and it has been Offered this day at £5/5 per Cent." If the price sank lower, as he anticipated, Gerard intended to send the cocoa on to Philadelphia, provided the price had kept up there. Actually the price dropped in Philadelphia as well as in New York and Gerard had to sell at £4/5.[46] On another occasion Gerard arranged in sending a shipment of peas to Rhode Island that no other consignment of that commodity would be accepted as cargo by the captain, but he instructed the consignee to sell quickly "before Others arive."[47]

At times Gerard registered generalized complaints about the Rhode Islanders. He exclaimed in desperation during the depressed times of 1753 that "Your markit is . . . so D—d inCertain that One Can never Git anything by it."[48] At the next major downturn in 1761 he charged Rhode Islanders with selling West Indies products "higher than Any Other Place on the Continent"[49] and accused one correspondent of picking out the poorest quality products to send to New York.[50] It is difficult, however, to take such statements very seriously in view of Gerard's life-long preference for the Rhode Island trade.

It is significant that Gerard almost never employed captains or supercargoes to sell for him at Rhode Island, although he was not at all reluctant to do so when shipping to Boston and its environs. Gerard's principal reason for this policy was probably the desire not to offend his correspondents as he had been offended in 1749 by Rhode Islanders who consigned rum to ship captains who of course had to dispose of it quickly and so

[46] Fowler, March 4, 1754, April 2, 1754. See also White, April 1, 1754, regarding the price at Philadelphia.

[47] Fowler, March 21, 1752.

[48] Fowler, November 5, 1753.

[49] Townsend, May 18, 1761.

[50] Bowler, August 28, 1761.

drove down the price to the detriment of Gerard and those who had consigned rum to him for sale on their accounts.[51]

As in so many other aspects of his business, Gerard's earliest contact with Philadelphia came about through his Rhode Island correspondence. In the early summer of 1748 John Channing had sent a sloop-load of fish, sugar, and rum to New York in the hope that with the proceeds Gerard would be able to make the necessary arrangements for a flag-of-truce voyage. When tightening restrictions rendered that course of action inexpedient, Gerard exercised the discretion granted him by sending the sloop to Philadelphia in ballast and forwarding overland sufficient specie to load the vessel with flour for Rhode Island.[52] From this experience Gerard gained a correspondence with John Morgan of Philadelphia, but the relationship foundered within a year despite Gerard's offer to allow 5% commission for the "Extroydinary Troubles" of which Morgan complained in forwarding a shipment of linseed oil Gerard had ordered.[53]

It was some time before a regular correspondence was reestablished. Gerard journeyed to Philadelphia himself toward the end of 1749,[54] but if he sought to locate a resident agent he did not succeed. The following fall, when he sent a small shipment of flaxseed to Philadelphia, he consigned it to the ship's captain.[55] It was not until the middle of 1753 that Gerard began to write regularly to Philadelphia again. This time his correspondent was a prominent local resident, Townsend White.[56] The association, including White's service as insurance broker for a time in 1754 when Gerard found Philadelphia rates lower than New York's, seemed mutually satisfactory, but for unexplained reasons it terminated at the end of 1754.[57]

After the conclusion of his association with Townsend White, Gerard began to correspond with John Sayre, another promi-

[51] Wilson, February 9, 1749.

[52] Channing, June 29, 1748; Morgan, July 4, 1748.

[53] Morgan, June 19, 1749.

[54] Thurston, October 23, 1749.

[55] Clark, October 5, 1750.

[56] See Harrington, 224.

[57] See letters cited in Chapter VIII, note 27.

nent Philadelphian[58] and occasional partner of Thomas Wharton. In some unaccountable manner Sayre had received for Gerard a shipment of lignumvitae arriving from the West Indies in the winter of 1752–53.[59] After that cargo had been disposed of it was three years before their correspondence resumed. Then it could hardly be said to have flourished. Gerard, as we have seen, complained bitterly that indigo sent him as French was not all of that variety and quality. A bale of cotton which he received shortly afterward Gerard was happy to return to the man from whom Sayre had obtained it, not because of any defect in the product, but merely because it could not be sold in New York or even shipped to Boston except at great loss.[60] On their third endeavor a careless cartman broke nearly all of fifteen gross of pipes.[61] On their fourth undertaking Gerard had Sayre ship a ton of cocoa to Lloyd in Boston, but seven barrels of it were so bad according to Lloyd's report that Gerard had to insist on returning them or receiving a proper allowance.[62] But the climax in this series of business frustrations came in 1757 when, despite Gerard's warning, Sayre and Wharton permitted a large consignment of ginger to be shipped for New York in a damp condition. It turned out, wrote Gerard, "Just as I described to you it would do." The ginger and the bags it came in were so rotten that "I was Obliged to Procure Others [bags] and Geather it up by the handsfull out of the Vessel." It was "So hot," he continued, "that it would Almost have Roaster and Egg if put into a bag of it, and Could Scarce Continue my hand in it." Gerard wrote temperately about recovering from the insurers,[63] but his letterbook records no further mention of John Sayre or Thomas Wharton.

After this fiasco Gerard's correspondence with Philadelphia, most of it in the 1760's, was confined largely to questions of debt-collection and transfers of funds, although a letter to James Childs in 1757 indicates that Gerard had then sought insurance in Philadelphia on a privateer and also had made some

[58] Harrington, 224.

[59] Sayre, January 23, 1753. See also William Lloyd, August 18, 1752.

[60] Sayre, February 11, 1756.

[61] Sayre, June 21, 1756.

[62] Sayre, June 21, 1756.

[63] Sayre, May 23, 1757.

commodity transactions with that gentleman.[64] If he had future correspondence relating to the exchange of goods with Philadelphia he made no record of it in his letterbook.

Two concluding observations suggest themselves with reference to Gerard's trade with Philadelphia as contrasted with that to Rhode Island. When Beekman sent cargo to Philadelphia he frequently wanted specie or sterling bills on London in payment and the same was very often true of those who sent goods to him from Philadelphia.[65] In the Rhode Island trade much more reliance was placed on the exchange of commodities.

A second difference lies in the greater frequency with which Gerard made shipments from Philadelphia or arranged for incoming cargoes to be directed to his order in that port. Gerard made shipments from Philadelphia to Boston,[66] Rhode Island,[67] Ireland,[68] London,[69] and the West Indies.[70] Incoming cargo or correspondence for Gerard came via Philadelphia at one time or another from London,[71] Ireland,[72] and the West Indies.[73] Rhode Island, save for a few instances in the West Indies trade,[74] performed no comparable services.

Gerard's business with the southern colonies was slender. In the earlier years of his career, as one might expect, he entrusted his ventures to the care of captains or supercargoes. In 1749, for example, Gerard sent out eight hogsheads of rum consigned to John Schermerhorne to be exchanged in South Carolina for whatever Schermerhorne thought most advantageous.[75] Next year Lawrence Kortright received the same instructions for six

[64] Childs, November 21, 1757.

[65] Morgan, July 4, 1748, September 29, 1748, May 4, 1749, June 19, 1749; Vanderspeigel, November 21, 1748; Kibby, December 25, 1749; Clark, October 5, 1750; White, December 17, 1753, November 18, 1754.

[66] Sayre, June 21, 1756.

[67] Channing, June 29, 1748; White, December 17, 1753. In the latter case the goods ordered were not sent.

[68] Marshall, January 31, 1757. See also Cunningham and Gardner, November 27, 1752.

[69] Snell, March 15, 1750; Scott, December 15, 1752.

[70] Stevens, November 5, 1749; Morgan, November 5, 1749.

[71] Snell, November 15, 1749; William Beekman, July 8, 1749.

[72] Ross, January 24, 1768.

[73] Morgan, January 5, 1750.

[74] Gilbert, November 18, 1750; Fowler, December 6, 1755.

[75] Schermerhorne, February 9, 1749.

hogsheads of rum.[76] In 1753 Gerard sought wheat or flaxseed for provisions sent to Virginia.[77] A defect in the system turned up in 1754, however, when the captain to whom Gerard had entrusted 102 pounds of indigo and four quarter casks of wine for Virginia markets successfully made off with the cargo or its proceeds to parts unknown.[78]

By 1755 Gerard had begun to correspond with James Edward Powell of Georgia, a man recommended to him by three New York ship captains plying to that place,[79] and within the next few years he added other southern correspondents. To these residents Gerard offered excuses and apologies when he entrusted goods to ship captains or supercargoes bound for their ports. For example, having consigned a Georgia shipment to his brother David in 1775, Gerard explained to Powell that "my Brother . . . haveing nothing to do and a Desire of Seing Your Place and Carolina applyd to me, which I could not Refuse."[80] Later that same year, upon consigning another Georgia shipment to a ship captain, Gerard explained that it was "to Encourage My Neighbour Captain Willit Taylor with Whome I allways Ship Somethings."[81] Taylor was instructed, however, to leave his consignment with Powell if he could not sell it "at a Tolerable Proffit."[82] As late as 1760 Gerard entrusted a shipment for Virginia to a ship captain, an unlucky "Young beginer" whom he desired to help and from whom he expected returns in two months; however, after three years had passed Gerard was still seeking his return.[83] His letterbook recorded no subsequent consignments of cargo for the southern colonies to ship captains or supercargoes.

Between 1759 and 1763 Gerard dealt with a Virginia resident. In 1759 this correspondent in the Old Dominion, Archibald White, shipped turpentine to New York on his own initiative and wheat at Gerard's suggestion.[84] Next year Gerard was

[76] Kortright, September 12, 1750.
[77] Bates, September 13, 1753.
[78] Rutgers, April 22, 1754.
[79] Powell, May 30, 1755.
[80] Powell, May 30, 1755.
[81] Powell, November 2, 1755.
[82] Taylor, November 3, 1755.
[83] Tucker, August 20, 1760; White, December 12, 1761, April 12, 1762, April 26, 1763.
[84] White, July 20, 1759, August 18, 1759, October 5, 1759.

about to return to him as unsalable a quantity of low-grade snuff, but "a person bound to Ginney" appeared with an offer three times the amount of the best previous bid. Consequently Gerard wrote instead that he could sell 300 more bottles at the same price, "if It Comes in 3 Weeks." He did return to White some hats such as were "Not used with us" and offered to send on his own account both sugar and molasses.[85] A cargo of Virginia turpentine did poorly in 1761 but in the drought year of 1762 Gerard tried hard to get oats, corn, hay, and butter from Virginia in quantity.[86] There is no evidence to show that he succeeded and the next year the correspondence ended.

Gerard's business with the Carolinas centered on indigo (see Chapter VIII). In the 1750's North Carolina seems to have interested him more often than South Carolina, but in the late 1760's when his interest in the indigo business seemed to be reviving Gerard's letters went only to Charleston.[87]

With the youngest of the thirteen colonies Gerard's correspondence was more extensive. His earliest letter to James Edward Powell suggested that that gentleman become one-third owner along with Gerard and Captain Taylor of a sloop to ply regularly between New York and Georgia with whatever cargo Powell would judge from time to time "to answer best, no Commisions to be Charged on Either side."[88] That prospects for such an undertaking were less enthusiastically viewed by Powell than by Gerard is indicated not only by the failure to establish such an arrangement, but also by the fact that Powell sent his vessel next spring to the West Indies rather than to New York. Gerard's friend, Captain Taylor, also chose to go to the West Indies rather than to Georgia. Gerard considered hiring a vessel for Georgia on his own, but discarded the idea because of the reported glut of provisions in that place and the exorbitant cost of securing a ship.[89]

[85] White, August 20, 1760.

[86] White, December 12, 1761, April 12, 1762, August 9, 1762, April 26, 1763; Donald, November 1, 1762.

[87] Legare, December 15, 1752; Swan, June 9, 1755; Ede, December 24, 1755, March 13, 1756; Dunbibben, December 24, 1755, March 12, 1756.

[88] Powell, May 30, 1755.

[89] Powell and Wiley, March 27, 1756.

Gerard might have let his Georgia trade die at this point but for one thing. Powell owed him a fairly substantial sum for cargoes previously left there, apparently by David Beekman (see above) as well as by Captain Taylor. At first Gerard suggested remittance of sterling bills, which Taylor had told him were plentiful in Georgia in the spring. Gerard thought the payment could be sent by way of South Carolina where presumably a ship for New York could have been found.[90] Instead in the fall of 1756 Powell sent his ship to New York by way of Rhode Island with cargo which he undoubtedly hoped would pay his debts and make it possible for him to secure more provisions. Unhappily his ship encountered a series of misfortunes. Rhode Island took the best of his cargo and left only the dregs to New York. A fast-talking Rhode Islander also sold Powell's captain at 20/ per hundred a quantity of flour which could have been obtained in New York at 15/. Upon reaching New York some of the crewmen arrested the captain for wages; others who had jumped ship were hard to replace because most sailors, as Gerard put it, "are gone privateering." The net effect of the voyage was to increase Powell's debt to Gerard by "at least £20." Gerard himself found it now "Out of my power" to ship cargo in return because of "repeated Losses" and the widespread detention of his funds by others.[91]

Needless to say Gerard sent no more cargo to Georgia, but confined his efforts to the attempt to collect for what he had already sent. In 1757 he asked a Georgia lawyer, Thomas Rasberry, to sue the debtors,[92] but that discreet gentleman declined because, as Gerard put it, "their Conections was so great."[93] Subsequent dunning letters evoked no response, but in 1760 the debtors were unexpectedly thrown into Gerard's power. The captain and mate of a vessel owned in part by Powell's partner, if not also by Powell himself, somehow arrived in New York after being deprived of their vessel by a mutiny. Unaware of the obligations of their owners in New York these

[90] Powell and Wiley, March 27, 1756.
[91] Powell and Wiley, November 19, 1756.
[92] Rasberry, July 2, 1757.
[93] Fowler, June 25, 1760.

two talked freely about their experience. Thus when the pirates took the ship into Rhode Island, Gerard arranged through a correspondent to have it seized as security for Powell's debt.[94] A year of litigation resulted in a judgment in Gerard's favor in the Rhode Island courts and in 1764, nine years from the time of the original transaction, Gerard received the note of his lawyer, Martin Howard, for £1,139, Rhode Island Old Tenor, in payment of the judgment.[95] Unfortunately Howard was a leading defender of the Stamp Act which Parliament imposed upon the colonies in 1765. Choosing the part of discretion rather than of valor after his house had been destroyed in Rhode Island's Stamp Act riots, Howard fled to England with scant regard for his obligation to Gerard. Two years later when Howard had returned to Boston Gerard instructed Henry Lloyd to have him sued upon the note. The lack of further correspondence on the subject suggests that in Boston Gerard's Georgia business ventures of 1755 had at last been concluded, twelve years after their commencement.[96]

Trade with the Caribbean area was of tremendous importance to Gerard's mercantile activities even though his correspondence with that region was not particularly voluminous. Its volume was in fact far exceeded by that of Gerard's letters to Ireland or to Rhode Island. The importance to Gerard of the Caribbean trade was largely indirect. In the first place, much of the New York produce which Gerard shipped to Rhode Island undoubtedly found its way ultimately to that region. Similarly a high proportion of the products Gerard received from Rhode Island were of Caribbean origin. Thirdly, a significant percentage of the articles Gerard exported from New York was made up of Caribbean-area products which he had purchased in New York or a neighboring port rather than imported on his own account. Finally, it is clear that Gerard's insurance business, his shipping interests, whether in privateering,

[94] *Idem.*

[95] Fowler, July 6, 1761; Lloyd, July 22, 1767; Fowler, April 4, 1765.

[96] Lloyd, July 22, 1767. On Howard's troubles in Rhode Island see the account by Edmund S. and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 144–148.

flag-of-truce vessels, or bona fide merchantmen, and, in its initial phase, his indigo business, were all dependent upon trade with the Caribbean region. Only the flaxseed trade among Gerard's major business interests was relatively independent of Caribbean connections.

Gerard's limited Caribbean correspondence embraced roughly a dozen different places in that area. About one-third of it went to Jamaica; the only other islands with which Beekman had more than one transaction were Barbados, St. Eustatius (Dutch), Curaçao (Dutch), and St. Croix (Danish). Places with which Beekman had only one transaction included St. Thomas (Br.), Cayenne (Fr.), Antigua (Br.), Hispaniola (Sp.), Montserrat (Br.), Monte Christi (Sp.). Unfortunately the destination of several other letters seemingly related to Caribbean trade could not be conclusively established.[97]

The most salient aspect of this correspondence is its general orientation toward the procurement of Caribbean products demanded in New York rather than toward the sale of New York provisions. A typical letter illustrating this point was one which Gerard wrote William Lloyd of Jamaica in 1752. He had not answered a series of letters from Lloyd, Gerard confessed, because there was nothing to be sent with prospect of profit.

[97] Jamaica letters: Taylor, October 25, 1746; Thong, February 5, 1748; William Beekman (cousin, not brother), November 25, 1758; Ludlow, March 9, 1750; Lloyd (including letters to Seymour and Lloyd), March 9, 1750, August 18, 1752, October 9, 1752, June 8, 1753, August 17, 1754, October 21, 1754, November 20, 1754; Henry Lloyd, February 3, 1755 (on death of William Lloyd); Scott, December 15, 1752; Livingston, May 26, 1755. Barbados letters: Gilbert, November 18, 1750; Hackett, February 7, 1766, May 7, 1766; Taylor, February 10, 1766; Moore, May 7, 1766, Barrow, May 8, 1766. St. Eustatius letters: Marsh, February 4, 1749; Stevens, November 5, 1749, January 5, 1750; Winkler, August 8, 1750 (see also Taylor, August 8, 1750); Miller, December 3, 1750; Montgomery, April 8, 1756. Curaçao letters: Van Ranst, November 1, 1749, April 20, 1750, June 29, 1750, August 8, 1750. St. Croix letters: Tichbourne, December 27, 1756, September 2, 1757; Ogaro, December 30, 1756; David Beekman, March 8, 1766, June 17, 1766. St. Thomas letters: Steall (Steele?), April 10, 1749. Cayenne reference: Fowler, December 6, 1755. Antigua letter: Stevens, September 26, 1752. Hispaniola letter: White, September 30, 1754. Montserrat letter: Horsfield, January 4, 1757. Monte Christi letter: Sears, October 17, 1759. St. Kitts reference: Burnet, March 6, 1759. Unknown Caribbean ports: letter dated only July, 1750, without addressee; another unaddressed letter, June 4, 1753; Cebra, June 30, 1755; Kortright and Lawrence, April 14, 1756; Burnet, March 6, 1759.

The tobacco he now sent Gerard dismissed as "Tryfelling," but he wanted 500 pounds of French indigo and eight or ten tons of lignumvitae. For these he proposed to pay Lloyd's draft on sight or send whatever Lloyd requested.[98] Gerard did of course send provisions to the Caribbean on his own account occasionally, but in general, especially in the later years, he preferred to sell in person at New York the products in which he invested his own money.

Perhaps because of this preference Gerard never developed a regular correspondence with any resident of the Caribbean area except William Lloyd of Jamaica, the brother of his Boston correspondent. Although Lloyd had taken a partner some time before his death in 1755, Gerard did not continue the correspondence after that time. Gerard might have established business with his half brother David who set himself up in business at St. Croix about 1766, but by that time Gerard was contracting rather than expanding his commercial undertakings. Quite often Gerard's Caribbean ventures were entrusted to ship captains whom he knew and trusted, such as Willet Taylor and Isaac Sears. Occasional letters did go to local residents, but, except for Lloyd, these were always "one shot" ventures.

Scattered, sporadic, speculative, Gerard's Caribbean ventures refuse to fall into any clear patterns other than those already set forth. Probably the most important observation to be made is the obvious one that however crucial to his own trade as well as to that of all the northern colonies was Caribbean commerce Gerard saw little reason to participate in it himself on a regular basis. Its risks were too great and its profits too slim.

The importance of Southern Europe to Gerard's trade was minimal. An Irish vessel consigned to Gerard in the flaxseed trade once came in with cargo from Cadiz for Gerard to sell, but the voyage proved not too satisfactory and was not repeated.[99] Gerard's London correspondent suggested in 1749

[98] Lloyd, August 18, 1752.

[99] Cunningham and Schoals, October 21, 1754, December 17, 1754.

that grain would be "at a good price in the Southern part of France," but Gerard found it too high in New York to ship at that time.[100] The next summer when Snell ordered wheat for Cadiz on his own account Gerard expressed regret that he could not make the shipment because the price specified was under that of the New York market. He thought wheat at the New York price would have sold advantageously in Cadiz that year, but he sent none on his own account.[101] There is in fact no indication that he ever sent anything to Southern Europe on any one's account.

With the "wine" islands Gerard did a slight business. In 1752 he sent provisions consigned to a supercargo bound for the Canary Islands with instructions not only to bring wine in return, but also to attempt to contract for the sale of up to a ton of spermaceti mold candles. This attempt failed and the Canary Islands do not again enter Gerard's letterbook.[102]

With Madeira Gerard was only slightly more successful. A supercargo took provisions to exchange for wine in 1753,[103] but there was no attempt to follow up until 1758 when Gerard hoped through a complicated plan to receive Madeira for flour which he had sent to Ireland; again he failed.[104] We have seen that he ordered wine from three different houses in Madeira in 1759,[105] but despite the quantity involved it seems evident that this was for his personal use rather than for commercial purposes. In 1763 he explained that he had had no occasion since 1759 to order wine because it was available in New York "as Cheap as we Can send for it."[106] He did send another personal order that year, however, and followed it with a warning about the customs regulations. A recent vessel from Madeira, he said, had been seized with all her cargo including some nuts Gerard had ordered because there had been "Contraband goods on board." He suggested that his correspondent advise friends "not to bring any Lemonds or Cittron for Our floating Custom

[100] Snell, November 16, 1749.
[101] Snell, August 2, 1750.
[102] Spencer, dated only July, 1752.
[103] Newton, December 19, 1753.
[104] Marsden, May 25, 1758, March 9, 1759.
[105] See Chapter VI and also the section on England in this Chapter.
[106] Searl, September 24, 1763.

house Officers are Very Strict."[107] His wine successfully passed the customs officers, but it was so unsatisfactory in price, quality, and quantity, much having leaked out, that Gerard would probably not have ordered more even if Parliament had not imposed a very stiff duty that same year.[108]

In company with his uncle Dr. William Beekman and several others[109] Gerard made one disastrous investment in the African trade. Preparations for the voyage began in the fall of 1748. Then Gerard ordered from Rhode Island "Good Rum suitable for a Guinney markit . . . in good Suffitient Cas[ks] made on porpose without any Sap." He also transmitted the request of Captain Holmes that George Bryant be asked to "Come to this Place to go the Voiage . . . as Cheiffmate."[110] Under Holmes's command the brig *Revenge* set sail on January 18 for Gambia. Two days later Gerard wrote to London for insurance of £150 each on his interest in vessel and cargo. He hoped by setting forth in detail the excellent preparations which had been made and the conservative instructions given the experienced captain to secure a lower premium as well as to avoid conflict with the insurers in case of loss.[111]

Doubts as to the wisdom of the undertaking were not many months in finding expression. In June Gerard expressed the view that the voyage would "heardly bare Insurance."[112] In July a letter from the captain indicated that he had arrived safely on April 7 but to a dull market. Two more of the owners decided to insure their interests; Gerard made the arrangements for them through his London correspondent.[113] The *Revenge* had been expected back in the fall, but when it had not arrived by November Gerard and his co-owners, anticipating that she would be or had been "blown off our Coast," wrote instructions

[107] Searl, February 13, 1764.

[108] Searl, June 3, 1764.

[109] A. Lefferts, Samuel and David Van Horne, John Provoost (Holms, November 21, 1749). Gerard was closely related (see Chapter VI) to all of the other owners except Provoost. See Chapter X for an account of Dr. William Beekman's interest in this voyage.

[110] Thurston, October 17, 1748. Rum such as he wanted sold at 3/8 while other rum brought only 3/6 or 3/7 per gallon, Gerard reported.

[111] Snell, January 20, 1749.

[112] Snell, June 5, 1749.

[113] Snell, July 5, 1759.

to Jamaica. The owners wanted all the slaves sold except for eighteen of the best boys whom they wished kept for themselves. The proceeds they desired half in cash and half in rum and sugar. A measure of desperation was evident in the suggestion that Captain Holmes sell the ship and everything on it if he could get £600. The owners further urged speed and frugality. The letter went to Henry Livingston who was requested to take over if the captain should prove "otherwise then well."[114]

After many more months of apprehensive waiting[115] news finally arrived from a Guineaman returning to Rhode Island that the *Revenge* was safe and on its way home. Gerard wrote anxiously to inquire of the Rhode Islander the quantity of dust, teeth, and camwood aboard and the condition of the Negroes.[116] Twenty months after her departure the *Revenge* put into New York badly battered and carrying a considerable portion of her original cargo as well as forty-five slaves, seventy-nine ounces of gold dust, 3½ tons of camwood, and no teeth. Cargo and wages having cost respectively £2,600 and £300, Gerard confidently expected to lose £300 on his one-sixth interest. Fortunately he expected to recover in some measure from the insurers for damage to the vessel at Barbados and elsewhere. The insurance adjustment was probably made in his behalf by John Provoost, one of the owners, who departed for London on the ship which bore Gerard's claim.[117]

In addition to the records of this disaster Gerard's correspondence offers a few other observations on the Guinea trade. He remarked to a Rhode Islander, for example, in 1748 that pewter was not available in New York because it had all been "bought up for the Ginney Trade."[118] A year later, although reports had already come back telling of the dull markets, Gerard recorded that several ships were fitting out for Guinea.[119]

[114] Holms, November 21, 1749.

[115] Snell, January 9, 1750, June 12, 1750.

[116] Thurston, August 29, 1750.

[117] Snell, September 29, 1750. See also Gilbert, September 24, 1750. In the letter to Gilbert Gerard had estimated that his loss would be £400. The absence of any letters for the year 1751 makes it impossible to determine what agreement was made with the insurers.

[118] Thurston, December 7, 1748.

[119] Thurston, November 20, 1749.

We have already observed that he sold lowgrade snuff for the Guinea trade in 1760.[120] In 1763 Gerard informed a Rhode Islander of the insurance premiums demanded for a Guinea voyage and added the information that the underwriters would "Pay for Such Slaves as are Kill[ed] in Subdoing" an insurrection.[121] There is no record of the Rhode Islander's reaction to this bargain offer. It certainly did not move Gerard; he seldom lost money twice in the same way.

Gerard G. Beekman's business reached four continents, but his contacts with South America and Africa were limited and inconsequential. The important areas in his business were flaxseed-consuming Ireland, the port cities of the northern colonies in which he exchanged a variety of goods and services on a commission basis, and the southern and Caribbean colonies from which at times he obtained products demanded in the North. His career does not conform to the pattern usually attributed to merchants of the northern colonies (See Chapter XVI) nor was it similar to that of his cousin, James Beekman, which also diverged from the expected pattern.

[120] See the section on Gerard's trade with the South.

[121] Cranston, February 28, 1763.

THE MERCHANTS

Dr. William Beekman (1684-1770)
Mercantile Adventurer

10

FROM GENERALIST TO SPECIALIST, 1744-1750

DR. WILLIAM BEEKMAN, father of James, stands forth far more clearly as a person and as a businessman than did his brother, the father of Gerard G. Beekman. In the first place he lived longer. Gerard's father, although younger by eight years, died in 1746; Dr. William Beekman died at the age of eighty-five in 1770. William's name also appears more frequently in public records than did that of his brother, but the major factor making it possible to comment at some length upon William Beekman is the survival of a small account book providing details of his business operations for the years 1744 to 1750. The description and analysis of this small portion of his long career provides an interesting transition between the studies of his nephew and his son.

The little which is known of William Beekman's life prior to 1744 can be quickly summarized. His education was medical. Probably it was administered largely by his father whose medical education and career have been discussed in Chapter IV. Although less annotated, William's handwritten copy of the great medical textbook by Sylvius of Leyden bears much similarity to that made by his father.[1] William's copy bears the date, 1705, his twentieth year, suggesting that, like his father, William may have completed his education and begun to practice at about that age.

Unfortunately William's own papers leave no indication of

[1] Both these Dutch manuscript tomes are to be found in the library of the New York Academy of Medicine.

what he did from 1705 to 1721, but in the latter year he suddenly turned up in London. There on October 7, 1721, Samuel Rhodes of Yorkshire in effect empowered Beekman to collect a loan of seven guineas which Rhodes had made two days before at a tavern in Thames Street, London, to James Smith, a New York resident. Three months later, Smith and William both having returned home, a small payment was made on the loan and forwarded by Beekman to Rhodes in Yorkshire. Eleven years later Beekman forwarded to Rhodes the balance of the debt. The story illustrates perhaps the extent to which "gentlemen" of the 18th century felt obligated to exert themselves to help each other, but it suggests also that William may have had some business connections with England even at this date.[2]

Another lacuna in William's records following 1721 is interrupted by a newspaper report indicating that a ship captained or more probably owned by William made two voyages between New York and Boston in 1727. The purpose of the voyages is not explained.[3]

Throughout his life William continued to be referred to at times as "doctor," but there appears also a continuing interest in waterfront properties. Just before his father's death in 1723 William "purchased" from his parents two lots in George Street, then or later to be the site of "Beekman Wharf" (now Market and Water streets), and one in Queen Street near the family brewhouse and slaughterhouse and at the site of "Beekman Slip." William purchased another "water lot" in the Beekman Slip area from Francis Wessells in 1727 for £52. From his sister Cornelia Van Dam he acquired in 1737 the lot to the west of his original Queen Street possession. Also in 1737 William extended his holdings to the south by obtaining full title to another adjoining lot in which he had held half-interest

[2] Beekman Family Papers, Box 17, F-1. The Beekman papers include a merchant's ledger, mostly in Dutch, covering the years 1716–1733. This may have been kept by William, but there is no certain indication of the merchant's identity. Whoever he was, the merchant dealt in a variety of commodities with numerous storekeepers and other business people throughout the New York area.

[3] *Ibid.*, Box 43. Another William Beekman was a New York ship captain at a later date.

since 1735. Thus by 1737 William had real property holdings admirably suited to serve as a base for commercial operations.[4]

Despite these real-estate activities suggestive of commercial interests there is no actual record of William's engaging in business until 1744. A not-too-orderly account book kept by William's son Abraham, who apparently had used it previously for French exercises, begins in that year to record details of William's business career.[5] There were three basic aspects of his business activity. He imported "sundry merchandize"—chiefly dry goods—from England and the continent; he sold provisions to (or traded otherwise with) Caribbean-area and other American merchants; and he owned shares in ships which he sent out either as merchant vessels or as privateers. Because the business pattern changed so sharply at the conclusion of King George's War, let us first consider these three areas of business activity as they developed during the war years, 1744–1748.

The book's first account, which one finds following the French exercises, deals with the English trade. In particular it deals with Joseph Mico, merchant in London. The initial entry in this account is a credit to Mico of £28, "Ballance of an Account Current Received from Said Mr. Mico December 31, 1743." Clearly, William had been importing from England before 1744. However, because this balance is relatively small and because there were no balances carried over for most of the other merchants with whom William kept accounts in this book, it would seem likely that he was relatively new in this trade in 1744, or was now expanding his trade rapidly from a fairly small scale of operation prior to this time.

Joseph Mico was clearly William's favorite British correspondent. He received from Beekman in the years 1744 through 1748 remittances totaling approximately £3,500 in sterling. The bulk of these remittances went in the form of bills of

[4] *Ibid.*, Box 31.

[5] This book bears on the cover the inscription "Abraham Beekman, His Book, 1743," indicating probably that it was not originally intended as an account book, but that after Abraham had done French exercises in it for some time he was induced in 1744, perhaps as training, to do some of the family bookkeeping in it. Citations or quotations not otherwise identified in this chapter are from this account book.

exchange drawn by New York or Caribbean merchants on London firms. Some payments were made also in Spanish milled dollars, in pistoles, or in gold or silver bulk.

To Beekman's account Mico charged large shipments of "sundry merchandize" (probably dry goods for the most part), freight and insurance costs, and on occasion bills of exchange drawn on Mico by Beekman. Unlike many merchants Beekman seems to have kept this large account quite closely balanced; often it was balanced in his favor. He was never deep in debt to Mico.

With the firm of Sheldon & Wright, another London correspondent, Beekman transacted business between 1745 and 1748 to the value of £1,338. To this firm Beekman remitted no specie, but sent only bills of exchange drawn, as in the case of those sent Mico, by either New York or Caribbean merchants. As Beekman's agent in dealing with insurance underwriters, Sheldon & Wright gave credit frequently for returns on premium payments. These returns were 3% of the insured value if the ship bearing the goods traveled with a convoy through the English Channel and 5% if the convoy went as far as Cape Breton. Export bounties and drawbacks accounted for Beekman's few remaining credits.[6]

What Beekman imported from Sheldon & Wright, except for some "silk and worsted goods," remains obscured behind the usual heading "Sundry Merchandize." The correspondence could not have been especially pleasing to Beekman, however, for in 1748 he terminated the relationship with a bill on Joseph Mico to pay the balance of £62 which then existed in favor of Sheldon & Wright.

Destined to outlast Sheldon & Wright and even Mico in Beekman's favor was the firm of William Pomeroy & Sons, exporters of dry goods and other merchandise. Beekman received his first shipment from this London house September 20, 1745, and paid for it at once with a bill of exchange on a Bristol merchant. By the end of 1748 the volume of business between the two houses had reached a cumulative total of

[6] See Chapter XI page 348 for the definition of these terms.

about £2,130 sterling. Thus Pomeroy was a competitor of Mico for the lion's share of Beekman's current orders.

William's account with Thomas Penington of Bristol begins with a credit to the British merchant of £4 carried over from a statement of account dated May 4, 1745. Penington thus ranks with Mico as one of Beekman's earliest correspondents, although the date at which the correspondence began is unknown. Penington's shipments to Beekman included hats, rugs, blankets, as well as "Sundry Goods." Once Penington charged five shillings for the expenses of Samuel Jones "in the West to buy Kerseys," a coarse woolen cloth which William had ordered. He was also charged for postage of letters and for protesting unaccepted bills. By the end of 1748 the volume of business represented by this correspondence had grown to £1,700 with Beekman maintaining a substantial credit balance.

To all four of his British correspondents William had remitted from 1744 through 1748 the sum of £8,668 in sterling, the equivalent of £16,469 in New York money of 1748 when exchange was at 190 per cent.[7]

William's provision trade during the war years was far less in value than his British trade. It reached a total value, however, of about £4,900 in New York money. Approximately one fourth of this trade was directed to the Dutch islands of Curaçao and St. Eustatius. To these possessions of England's ally William dispatched during the war years cargoes of provisions which usually included flour, frequently beef or pork, and sometimes butter as well. Generally the cargoes were consigned to the ship's master or to a supercargo, but in Curaçao Beekman maintained a commission agency with the firm of Nicholas and Isaac "Governeur." He frequently consigned shipments to those individuals directly, or instructed the captain or supercargo to leave the shipments with them if he could not expeditiously complete the sales himself. From Curaçao Beekman always received payment in cash, most often Spanish milled dollars, also called pieces of eight. From St. Eustatius

[7] See Harrington, 108, for information on exchange rates of New York currency in this period.

payment was as likely to be in molasses, sugar, cotton wool, or gunpowder. Both these islands were notorious centers of illegal trade and the limited information afforded by Dr. Beekman's accounts suggests strongly that his provisions, ultimately at least, reached the hands of enemy French or Spanish subjects who provided the coin and the commodities brought back to New York.[8]

British islands of the West Indies also figured prominently in William's trade. At Jamaica William sold regularly through Read & DeWitt to whom, except for some small quantities of butter and tallow, Beekman's shipments consisted exclusively of flour. In exchange he received Spanish dollars, pistoles, sugar, broadcloth and lace at various times. Although no shipments were recorded to this firm after 1747, the account was not closed until 1769 at which time William had recovered only £752 on the £818 he had shipped, a loss of £66. The difference between a loss of this amount and a profit of about the same size was attributable to bad debts.

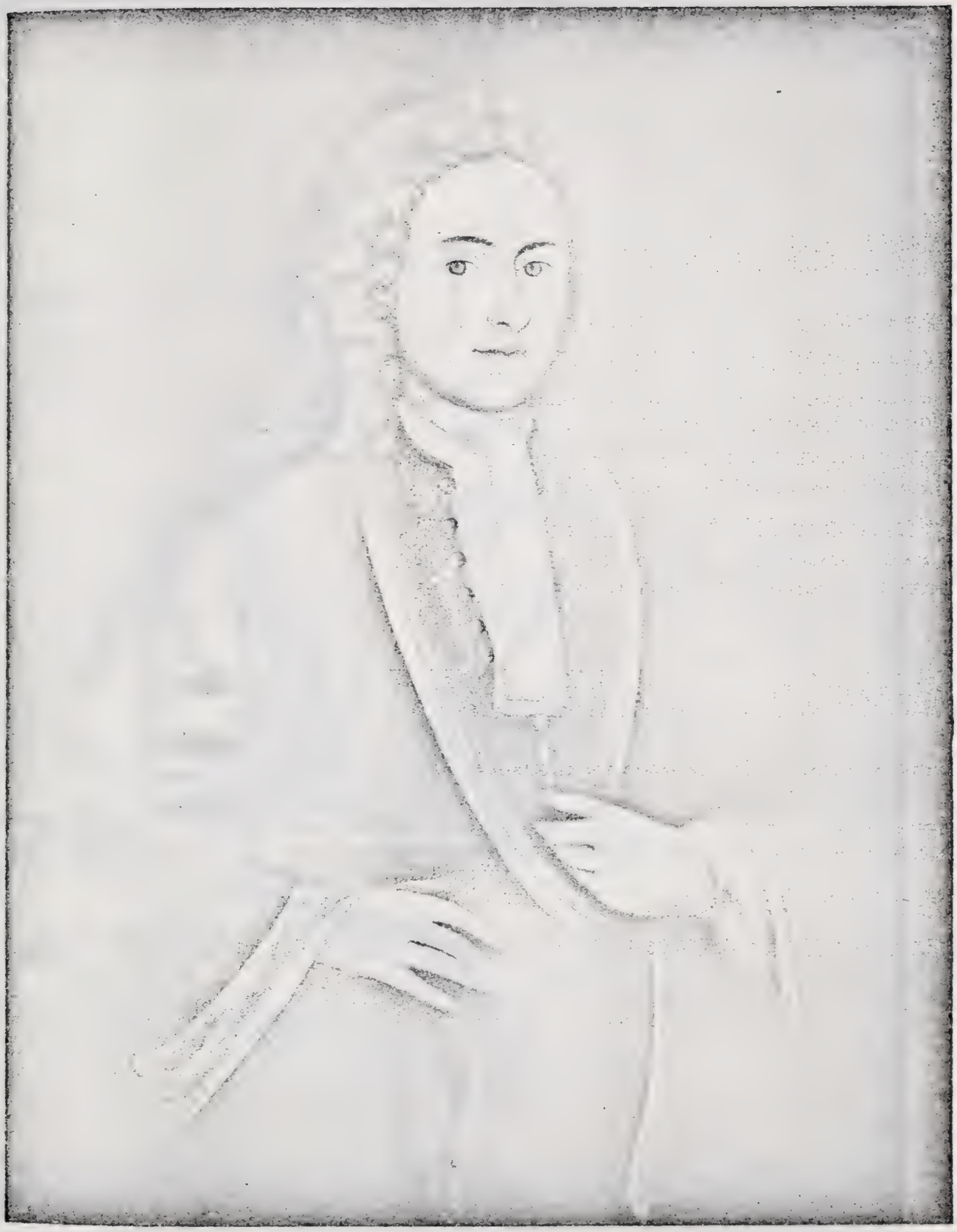
On the other hand, quite handsome profits accrued from several shipments to Jamaica consigned to the ship's master rather than to Read & DeWitt. In 1745, for example, eighty-eight barrels of flour which cost £70 for all expenses sold in Jamaica for £121, yielding a return of 73% four months after the investment. There were several such voyages, but in one instance the captain who was bearing to New York the proceeds of two shipments of flour was captured by "an Enemy Privateer in the Windward Passage." Fortunately he was then recaptured by an English man-of-war, which returned him to Jamaica. But there "charges" of an unexplained nature ate up all the profit and left instead a net loss of £24 for the two shipments which had cost £80.

The reputation of Jamaican merchants makes this trade scarcely less suspect than that to Curacao and St. Eustatius.[9]

To other British islands of the West Indies Beekman's

[8] See Pares, 343–51. Thomas Hancock, uncle of John, *ceased* trading in a similar way before the war with France began (Baxter, 84–91).

[9] See Pares, 119–120, and Harrington, 250–251.



26. DR. WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1684–1770)

Son of Col. Gerardus and Magdalen Abeel Beekman
and father of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Gerret Duyckinck, *c.* 1710

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, his great-great-great-grandson

27. MRS. WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1691–1765)

(Catharine Peters Delanoy)
Mother of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Gerret Duyckinck, *c.* 1710

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman, her great-great-great-grandson

28. CORNELIA BEEKMAN [MRS. WILLIAM WALTON] (1708–1786)

Daughter of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and sister of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1725

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

29. MAGDALEN BEEKMAN (1714–1784), AS A MAIDEN

Daughter of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and sister of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait attributed to Evert Duyckinck III, *c.* 1725

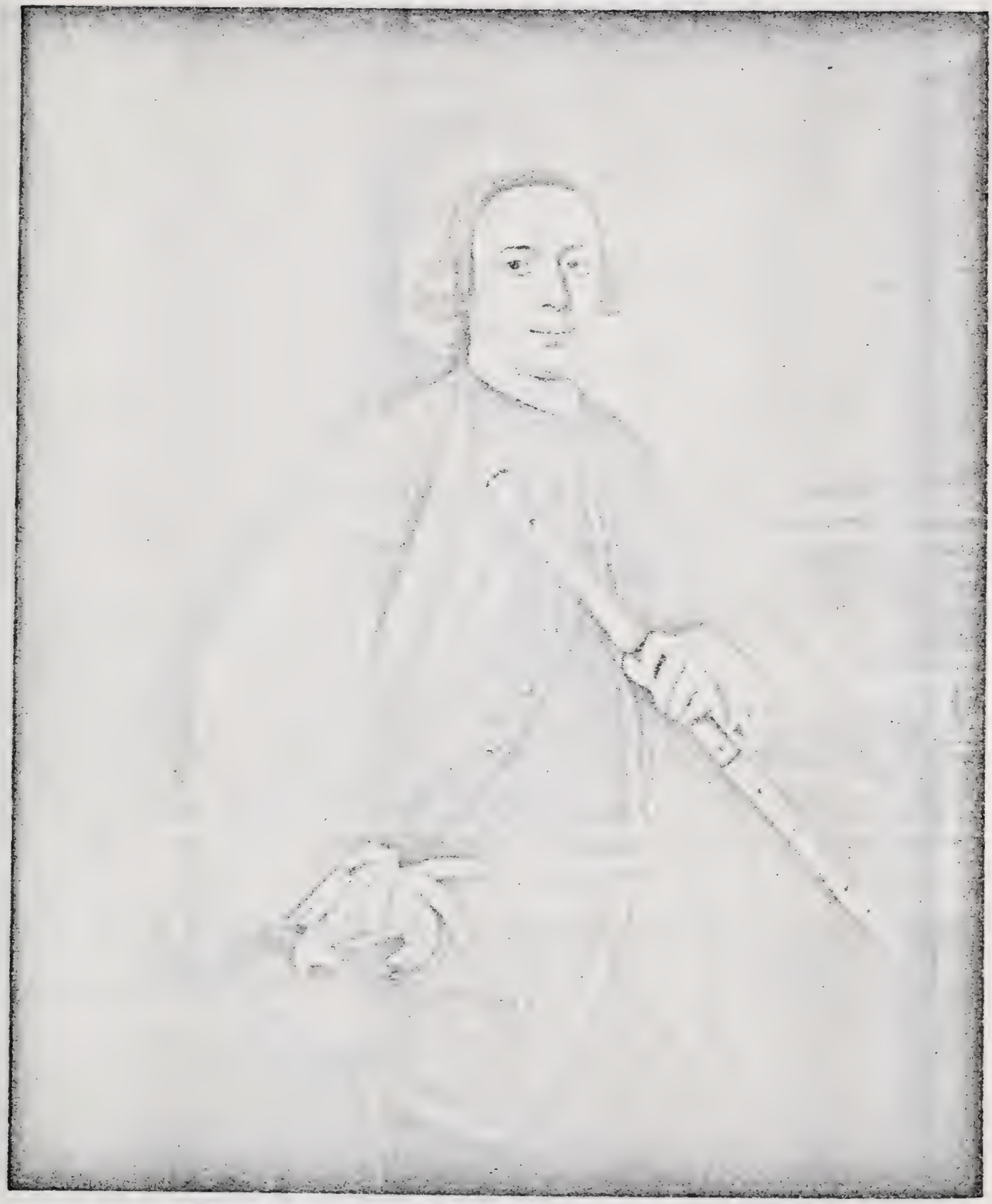
Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

30. MAGDALEN BEEKMAN (1714–1784), ABOUT 53 YEARS OLD

Daughter of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and sister of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait by Abraham Delanoy, *c.* 1767

Owned by The Beekman Family Association



31. DR. ABRAHAM BEEKMAN (1729–1789)

Son of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and brother of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait by Lawrence Kilburn, *c.* 1761

Owned by The Beekman Family Association

32. WILLIAM BEEKMAN (1725–1795)

Son of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and brother of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait by Lawrence Kilburn, *c.* 1761

Owned by Dr. Fenwick Beekman

33. CATHARINE (1717–1793) OR MARIA (1723–1793) BEEKMAN

Daughter of Dr. William & Catharine Delanoy Beekman
and sister of James Beekman, the merchant

Portrait by Abraham Delanoy, *c.* 1767

Owned by The Beekman Family Association

shipments were similar. In 1745 he sent to Antigua ninety-six barrels of flour which exchanged for a total of eight hogsheads of rum. The latter product then sold in New York for £138, yielding a profit of £41 on an investment of £97. On the other hand, a cargo of flour costing £95 was lost en route to St. Christopher when the brig *Dispatch* foundered, and an expedition to Tortola lost £52 when the two bales of cotton brought back yielded that much less than the cost of the beef and pork which had been exchanged for them.

In addition to his shipments to Dutch and British islands of the Caribbean, Beekman sent an occasional cargo to the Danish possessions in the Virgin Islands, where trade was also somewhat suspect.[10] For two shipments of provisions (flour and some pork) in April and May of 1746 William received in October by way of Tortola ten bales of "cotton wool" which sold for nearly £90 more than the cost (£130) of the provisions exchanged. An attempt to repeat this coup the following spring failed dismally, however, when a cargo of thirty-eight barrels of pork which had cost £107 fell prey to the enemy.

The extent to which William engaged during these years in the common practices of smuggling and trade with the enemy is almost impossible to determine. From Curaçao, a source of many smuggled imports, William never received anything but cash, according to his books, and his bad debts there were owed almost exclusively by small-scale operators, apparently retail merchants rather than war profiteers. From St. Eustatius William received some small shipments of cotton wool which are listed in his account book without mention of the payment of duties, although he did note duty payments on similar imports from the Danish islands. Whether he omitted paying the duties in this case or merely omitted citing such payment in his account book remains uncertain. The rum which came from St. Eustatius, although legally subject to duty under the Molasses Act, apparently paid none because the act was nowhere enforced; the provincial duty on rum William may have avoided also as did his nephew (see Chapter VI). Thus while

[10] Harrington, 251–253; Pares, 351.

Beekman may have smuggled an occasional shipment and the provisions he shipped to the West Indies almost certainly entered into illegal trade with the French at some point, there is no conclusive evidence to link William with illegalities.

Although Beekman never traded directly with the French islands during the war, one of his voyages departed from New York for Cape François "or elsewhere" in September, 1748, one month before the final conclusion of peace. Instead of shipping a specific quantity of provisions on his own account Beekman this time paid £81 for a one-sixth interest in a "general" cargo which he and his fellow investors may have hoped would be on hand at Cape François at the moment the news of peace arrived. This joint ownership was apparently designed to spread the risk of a highly speculative venture. Whatever its legal status the investment proved ill-advised for it failed by £25 to return Beekman the amount of his expenditure.

The major hazard to the profitability of William's wartime West Indian commerce, however, was not so much the uncertain fluctuations of the market as the activity of enemy men-of-war and privateers. In addition to the loss resulting from the capture and recapture of the ship captain bearing a remittance from Jamaica (see above) Beekman lost five different shipments outward bound for Caribbean ports. In all, his losses to enemy raiders during King George's War amounted to £503 according to his accounts, although he may have been protected in some measure by insurance. In any case his own income from privateering more than offset this amount.

In 1744 William and the other owners began to convert the sloop *William*, of which Beekman owned one eighth, into a brig to be outfitted as a privateer. By the end of 1745 the ship had earned for William Beekman more than £500, his one-eighth share of "Sundry Prizes" not otherwise identified except for one Dutch ship "carried to Antigua."[11] Next year the *William* took the *St. Joseph* which brought an income of approximately £6,000 of which Beekman's share was over £700.

[11] See Pares, 405–406, for the explanation of the seizure of vessels belonging to subjects of England's ally.

Other income from the *William* brought Beekman's total return in 1747 to £1,398 on an investment of £666, a profit of £732. Then, although the war continued for another year, the *William* was reconverted to a merchant ship.

Less successful as a money-maker than the *William* was the privateer sloop *Dolphin* of which Beekman also owned one eighth in 1745. With two other privateers the *Dolphin*, under command of Richard Langdon, captured and brought into Providence that year a ship called the *Anna Florentia*, presumably Spanish although its ownership is not identified. William received £5/18 as his one-eighth share of the *Dolphin's* one-third interest in 111 pistoles found on board the prize after a mysterious deduction of £17 for "Dutchman" and a more understandable expenditure of £2/16 for "Lawyer." From the sale of the ship and its cargo, however, William's share amounted to £225. In part payment of this sum William accepted from Henry Cuyler, one of the owners of the *Dolphin* who had been charged with the management of its affairs, an additional one-thirty-second ownership, valued at £100, in the privateer itself. He received another £100 in cash, but Cuyler still owed him £25 when the account was closed.

An additional reduction in Beekman's income from the *Anna Florentia* came about in a more unusual manner. There appears to have been some question as to the legality of the original seizure of the prize and, although the condemnation had been made at Providence, legal action was soon begun in New York against the privateer owners. William was sufficiently disturbed by this suit to pay £100 to two of his co-owners, Philip and Abraham Van Horne, on July 25, 1745, in return for their promise to release him from any obligation which might arise from the seizure of the *Anna Florentia*, its cargo, cash and Negroes. The Van Hornes were to forfeit to William the penal sum of £500 if they failed to carry out the agreement. However, no problem seems to have arisen and the *Dolphin*, converted meanwhile from sloop to brig, was back at sea the same year with Langdon again in command.[12]

[12] Beekman Family Papers, Box 17, F-1. These papers supplement the information in the account book.

Sailing off the coast of present-day Venezuela, west of Trinidad, on August 28, 1745, Langdon encountered and captured an unarmed merchant vessel of about eighty tons, the *Amity*. The ship's papers indicated that she was owned by Mordecai Alvares, merchant at Curaçao, but had been hired for this voyage by Cornelius Plier, also a merchant at Curaçao. The cargo of beef and cordage belonged, according to these papers, to Plier who had consigned it to the ship's captain, Philip de Jonge, a Dutch subject as were Alvares and Plier.

The *Dolphin's* captain, however, refused to accept the evidence of the *Amity's* papers. Langdon may have been well enough acquainted at Curaçao to suspect that the ship was not actually registered there. He may have been suspicious, too, because, although French merchant sailors were then in very short supply,[13] the majority of the ship's polyglot crew was of that nationality. Furthermore, a cargo of beef under wartime conditions would probably have brought a far better price in French territory than in another Dutch possession. Whatever his reasons Langdon took the ship as prize to Newport, Rhode Island. That distant point was preferred over West Indian ports probably because of less expensive court procedures and less crowded dockets.[14]

At the admiralty court in Newport, one French sailor from the *Amity* testified that the ship was bound for the French island of Martinique. However, the judge, influenced by the ship's papers and the captain's testimony, ruled that both ship and cargo were the possessions of Dutch subjects and hence not lawful prizes. Soon after this decision was rendered the *Amity's* boatswain mentioned to Thomas Randall, the *Dolphin's* Second Lieutenant, "that he see the Dutch Captain give some Papers to a french man named Sollit to put away." Randall then succeeded in finding these papers stowed away "between the Ceiling and the outside Plank the Larboard side in the Steerage of said Vessell." They proved conclusively that the

[13] Pares, 327.

[14] Charles M. Andrews, "Introduction" to *Records of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Rhode Island*, 1716–1752, ed. by Dorothy S. Towles (Washington: American Historical Association, 1936), p. 16n.

Amity and her cargo were both owned by one J. Diant of Martinique, a "Subject and Vassal to the french King." Accordingly the judge changed his original decision and awarded the ship and its cargo to the owners and company of the *Dolphin*.[15]

Two years and several prizes later the *Dolphin* changed its name to *Speedwell*. There seems to be no explanation for the change unless one assumes that superstitious owners hoped in that way to change their luck. Under the name *Dolphin*, commanded first by Langdon and later by Michael Beezley, the ship had failed by some £500 to return Beekman the amount he had invested in her. At any rate the *Speedwell*, newly outfitted and accompanied by the *Triton*, sailed from Sandy Hook "with a fine Northerly Wind" on Wednesday, September 2, 1747. She was commanded by Captain Thomas Beavens, who had replaced Beezley, and carried a crew of 110.

The *Speedwell* had both good luck and bad. Early in 1748 she captured the French ship *Brother*, but soon thereafter wrecked herself at Antigua. Beekman owned one-eighth and one-sixteenth[16] interests in the *Speedwell* and had advanced Evert Bogardus sufficient funds to purchase another one-eighth interest. Income from salvage and from the prize brought Beekman £752 which, after the repayment of the sum advanced Bogardus, left Beekman a net profit on the *Speedwell* of £537. Deducting from this the *Dolphin's* losses Beekman found a net profit of but £16 on an investment of about £1,670 over several years.

Beekman's privateering ventures on the whole, thanks to the success of the *William*, earned him a modest profit. He had expended in this endeavour more than £2,300 on which he realized a net income of £748. This was by no means spectacular in view of the length of time involved, but Beekman could take some satisfaction in that the £748 brought in by his privateers more than offset the loss of £503 which enemy men-of-war and privateers inflicted upon him.

[15] Dorothy S. Towles, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–329.

[16] How the one-thirty-second share obtained from Cuyler (see above) grew to one-sixteenth is not explained.

Unfortunately, from the profit standpoint, William Beekman also invested in merchant shipping. He seems to have avoided investment in merchant ships prior to 1747, but in that year he suddenly expended over £1,000 in such investments. Of this sum more than £200 went to finance two voyages of the brig *William*, now reconverted from privateer to merchantman. A voyage to Madeira yielded £75 to William for freight revenue as well as a 10% return on the wine he imported despite the fact that some of it turned "sower." However, a second voyage, this one to Jamaica, while earning £55 for freight, lost on the goods Beekman shipped on his own account more than double the Madeira profit. There had been additional expenses in outfitting the ship so that Beekman's net loss on the merchant voyages of the *William* was £65. Apparently the ship itself was also lost or sold on this voyage for it appears no more in William's accounts.

At the time of the *William*'s reconversion to a merchant vessel, Beekman was also building, as one-fourth owner, "The New Brigg William and Mary." Construction and initial cargo to Havana for this ship cost William about £425. After the Cuban trip the brig traveled to Belfast and Liverpool, and at the end of 1748 it embarked for Jamaica on its third voyage. By that time the ship had earned for William £544 in freight money from Havana, £330 on the cargo from Liverpool and Belfast and it was about to earn £300 in freight money and cargo from Jamaica. Thus in three voyages the ship had returned roughly £770 on William's investment of £834, a promising beginning.

While the *William and Mary* was under construction, work was proceeding also on a new sloop, *Catharine and Mary*, named perhaps for two of William's daughters. The ship was completed in 1748 at a total cost of £1,397 of which William paid one fourth. A cargo of barrel staves and sheep for Jamaica cost £113 plus insurance. This brought William's outlay for the first voyage, according to his calculations, to £419. The income barely covered the cost of cargo and insurance. A second voyage to Jamaica at the end of 1748, this one with flour,

gained a profit of £44. William then sold his share of the sloop to William Murray for £175, little more than half what he had put into her construction. William computed his net loss on the sloop to be £109.

A sidelight on the history of the *Catharine and Mary* is that her master for both voyages was William Beekman, half-brother of Gerard G. Beekman and the nephew of Dr. William Beekman. Gerard G. Beekman himself was apparently part-owner of the ship for his name appears frequently in his uncle's accounts for the vessel and his own letters include a set of instructions to Captain William Beekman for the disposition of cargo which Gerard shipped on the second voyage.

In all, during the war years William had invested about £25,800 (New York money). Since many of his investments turned over fairly rapidly, however, this figure should not be taken as an estimate of the total amount of capital available to him at any given time. Just under two thirds of this sum, about £16,469, went to British merchants in payment chiefly for dry goods. The balance was expended for ventures which centered primarily on the Caribbean area. Roughly £4,900 purchased provisions for export to Caribbean territories or Madeira and another £2,100, which also included sums expended for cargoes of provisions, was invested in merchant shipping employed chiefly in the Caribbean trade. The last £2,300 went into privateering. As the war progressed, however, each of the categories of Caribbean-oriented investments proved that it involved great risk, if not other aspects, too, which William Beekman found distasteful. Before the war ended he began to divert more capital from this general investment area to the English dry goods trade, a less spectacular, but to him far more attractive enterprise.

Before examining the continuation of this trend into the postwar period, let us take note that, despite the complexity and volume of his investments, William Beekman's interests during the war years had not been directed exclusively to matters of commerce. To what degree William maintained his interest in medicine is not clear, yet on October 10, 1745,

William was one of thirteen "Practitioners of Physick in the said City of New York" who signed a notice appearing in the *New York Weekly Post Boy* (October 14) to assure the public "that the Fever that this city was lately visited with, is very greatly abated; and that there are but few Persons at present sick. . . ." They further certified that they knew of no one "that has the Distemper called the Small Pox." One hopes that the merchant's evident self-interest in having such an epidemic minimized so that trade would not be impeded had not led the physician into excessive optimism. Apparently it had not, for the City's health returned,[17] and Beekman's attention reverted to commerce.

With the restoration of peace in 1748 Beekman's investment pattern came in for a full reappraisal. Just prior to the end of the war he had joined with others, as we have seen, in sending a cargo of provisions to Cape François. Another expedition went to St. Eustatius at the same time. Both lost money. Discouraged by the excessive competition responsible for these losses Beekman now virtually abandoned shipments of provisions to the Caribbean area until 1751. Furthermore, all his investments in mercantile shipping, save the one fourth interest in the *William and Mary*, had been eliminated and privateering of course ended with the signing of the peace. Where, then, assuming he wished to maintain some diversity among his investments, could William expend the capital which previously had flowed into these channels?

One investment prospect lay in the southern colonies. In 1745 William had dispatched a shipment of soap and candles costing £62 to Georgia to the care of John Lawrence. Not until mid-1747, however, did Beekman receive cash netting him £8 on the shipment. This long delay in making payment and Mr. Lawrence's inability to collect £5 from one of the purchasers evidently discouraged Beekman in 1749 from any further pursuit of the Georgia trade. Nor is there evidence that he traded with any other continental colony outside the New York area.

[17] *New York Weekly Post Boy*, October 14, 1745, *et seq.*

Early in 1749 William sent hard cash (pistoles) instead of provisions to the Caribbean for rum which had become scarce in New York. The venture paid off handsomely when the rum purchased at Antigua sold in New York at a profit of £34 on an investment of £110. This, however, was merely a short-run speculative venture, successful because of unusual local conditions. It was no answer to the long-run investment problem.[18]

In another venture of 1749 William made himself one sixth owner of the brig *Revenge* and its cargo for the Guinea coast. One of his co-owners, as we have seen, was his nephew, Gerard G. Beekman. William's share of the ship, its outfit, and cargo cost £656. Insurance obtained through Joseph Mico of London added another £31. One year and a half later when the *Revenge* returned to New York with its original cargo still largely intact, Beekman began desperately to try to salvage as much as possible from the wreck of his investment. Actually some of the ship's rum had been sold in Africa for cash; a few Negroes, a quantity of camwood and some gold dust had also been obtained.

Of William's share of the Negroes two were "kept for own use." They were a youth of about twenty named Dublin, valued at £60, and a girl named Hannah, valued at £45. Four other youths and one girl he sold for about £45 apiece. But William also bought at auction two more slaves from the "share" of one of the other owners and resold them at a profit of £15 after deducting "charges of all the Neagros."

Beekman found other ways, too, in which to attempt to recover some of his money. Part of his share of the camwood Beekman sold locally to a poor market, but the rest he re-exported to London at a profit of £45. There was no difficulty in disposing of the gold dust in New York to good advantage, but the returned portion of the original cargo provided more

[18] The speculative nature of this voyage is confirmed by the price chart for West Indian rum in Anne Bezanson *et al.*, *Prices in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), 179. The price was fluctuating wildly from 1747 to 1750. William seems to have purchased at one peak and to have sold after the price had begun to recover from an intervening drop of 50%. This was not the kind of investment in which to place all one's capital.

problems. Here again Beekman seems to have been more alert than some of the other owners. He not only sold to advantage his own share of the returned dry goods, "musketts," brass pans and basins, but he also bought from other owners some of the returned rum and other goods which he then resold at a profit. Furthermore, it was Beekman who found a purchaser for the ship itself, thus regaining part of the investment and also exacting a commission from his fellow owners.

The best Beekman could do, however, was to salvage £600. This was considerably short of the original investment to which there was added now the cost of wages for the captain and crew, the captain's commissions on transactions in Africa, and the charges of a slave auctioneer at New York. In all Beekman computed that he had "LOST on this unlucky Voyage—£208/5/8." He engaged no further in the African trade.

Another possible investment was in merchant shipping. William had experimented in this business since 1747, if not earlier, and in 1749 he still maintained a one-fourth interest in the *William and Mary*. Although on its first three voyages, concluded in early 1749, the ship had nearly completed paying for itself, William seemed to feel that such a record was not sufficiently outstanding to warrant additional attention to the same field. However, he did maintain his interest in this ship, helping to keep it seaworthy and to provide with the other owners a "general" cargo, *i.e.*, one in which each kept the same share of interest as he had in the ship. In 1749 William expended £40 to prepare the ship for a voyage to St. Thomas in freight. After the deduction of expenses at St. Thomas his income from freight charges was only £122, but sugar purchased there by the agent of the owners yielded Beekman an income of £83 over the purchase price. In 1750 William's expenditure of £92 in outfitting the ship once more was well repaid when the ship was "hired" at £122 by John Willett for a voyage to Cape François. Thus, in the early post-war years William was content to keep the *William and Mary* in operation, but its profits did not encourage him to put more money into the shipping business.

The use upon which William did decide for most of the capital he had formerly invested in privateering, shipping and the provision trade was the importation of more British and European goods. In the years 1749 and 1750 William sent approximately £11,900 *sterling* to England in payment for British goods. This was more than the cumulative total of his remittances to England during all four years of the war, and it more than doubled the rate of his annual importations of such goods.[19]

Two London firms, those of Joseph Mico and of Pomeroy & Streatfield,[20] continued to receive the major portion of William Beekman's business. In fact, 81% of William's remittances to England for the years 1749 and 1750 went to these two firms, £4,684 to Pomeroy & Streatfield and £4,482 to Mico. More than £1,000 went to Thomas Penington of Bristol and the balance of approximately £1,100 opened new accounts with five other houses, four in London and one in Bristol.

Within two years after the conclusion of peace William had also established accounts with two Amsterdam merchants, Daniel Crommelin and John Hodshon. Payments to these firms by the end of 1750 totaled only about £640, most of it to Crommelin.[21] Both these accounts as well as the new one in Bristol were carried by William in the name of his eldest son, Gerard W. Beekman, apparently as a means of introducing him to commerce.

While William was thus diverting capital from the Caribbean-oriented investments into the importation of more goods from England and the continent, another noticeable change in his business practices was taking place. During the war years

[19] Exchange rates had fallen from 190% in 1748 to 180% in 1750 (Harrington, 108), but even if calculated in New York currency William's remittances to England in the years 1749–1750 exceeded the total of those for the four preceding years.

[20] Pomeroy & Streatfield was a continuation of the firm of Pomeroy & Sons with which William had dealt before. The lead which this firm now enjoyed over Mico in actual payments received from Beekman was less than the lead it held in goods shipped to Beekman, indicating a further trend in 1750 in favor of Pomeroy & Streatfield who had trailed Mico in the war years.

[21] Accounts with the Dutch merchants actually were kept in Dutch florins; the sums so calculated have been translated into sterling.

William normally remitted to his English correspondents in bills of exchange; hardly ever did he ship specie. For example, in these years Pomeroy & Streatfield received no silver whatsoever and Mico had received only £473 in silver as opposed to £3,037 in bills. Yet in the years 1749 and 1750 more than half of Beekman's payments were in silver. Pomeroy & Streatfield, to use the same examples, received £3,149 in silver as opposed to £2,135 in bills. Mico was sent £2,479 in silver as against £2,003 in bills. In all, Beekman sent roughly £6,760 sterling from New York to England in silver in 1749 and 1750 while he brought no silver at all into New York in the period save for the meager West Indian earnings of the *William and Mary*, at most £500 in New York money. Such a situation could not long continue unless other New Yorkers vastly outdid Beekman in earning silver.

Unfortunately by the end of 1750 most of the accounts in Abraham's little volume had been transferred to another account book which has not survived. A few remaining accounts and scattered documents give some indication of the manner in which William conducted his business from 1750 until his death in 1770, but these can best be explored in conjunction with the more detailed records of his youngest son, James, whom William launched in 1750 upon what was to be a long career in that field of commerce toward which William's own interests had gravitated since 1748.

THE MERCHANTS

James Beekman (1732-1807)
Dry Goods Importer

11

GETTING STARTED, 1750-1755

IN 1750, when his own records start and his father's stop, James Beekman was eighteen. Despite the almost complete absence of documentary references to him between 1732 and 1750, there are indications as to the influences which operated upon James in those years. It is clear, for example, that James was born into what Virginia Harrington referred to as the "single, privileged, ruling class" created by "generations of inter-marriage" among New York's merchants, lawyers, and landholders.[1] Since Stuyvesant's time the Beekmans had been prominent as merchants, landholders, and as political leaders, although never as lawyers. The previous chapter has shown that Dr. William Beekman, although less well known than his father and grandfather, was nevertheless a man of wealth and prestige. The social position of his family was well established by marriages, past or contemporary, to members of such families as Livingston, Van Cortlandt, Delanoy, Duyckinck, Van Horne, and Van Dam. Indeed, in the year before James was born, his eldest sister Cornelia, with a dowry of £800, had married the very prominent merchant, William Walton, with whom she was to build and maintain one of New York's finest and most famous homes, the scene of many leading social events.[2]

[1] Harrington, 11.

[2] John Austin Stevens, Jr., *Colonial Records of the New York Chamber of Commerce, 1768–1784* (New York: John F. Trow, 1867), 55–68 (in the second of the book's two series of page numbers); *Magazine of American History*, II, 40; *New York Mirror*, March 17, 1832; New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, *Collections*, Vol. I, *Marriages from 1639 to 1801 in the Reformed Dutch Church of New York* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1890), 152.

Just as James was born into a social and economic elite, so also was he born to a religion. His great-great-grandfather had been one of the best known of the orthodox Calvinist theologians in The Netherlands and both his grandfather and his great-uncle had fought hard in defense of their Calvinist faith against the incursions of Anglicanism in New York. True, James' sister, Cornelia, had married an Anglican in William Walton, but the marriage was Dutch Reformed, not Anglican. The family remained firm in its accustomed faith.

Linked to the religious faith which James acquired at birth was a political creed to which the family had long shown loyalty. In Europe the Beekmans had fled from Catholic areas of Germany to help the Protestant Dutch in the struggle for independence from the arbitrary rule of Catholic Spain; in New York Beekmans had fought the dictatorial tendencies of Peter Stuyvesant, of Edmund Andros, and had sided with Jacob Leisler in the earlier and more "democratic" phases of his "revolt." In almost every Assembly which had met in the Province of New York there had been a Beekman seeking to add to the Assembly's powers at the expense of the royal authorities. Although James's father took no evident role in politics, the faith, as we shall see, remained unshaken among the members of his family.

The education of young James Beekman was apparently left to tutors, for there is no evidence of his having attended any of the colleges in the colonies or of his having gone abroad to study. Whatever the source of the instruction he received, James was highly proficient by the casual standards of his time in spelling. His letters contrast sharply in this respect with those of his very successful brother, Gerard W., and of his cousin, Gerard G. In clarity, however, James's letters often left much to be desired. By and large his education seems to have been quite practical. Although at least one of his brothers possessed a fine library,[3] James seldom evinced interest in scholarly pursuits.

[3] William Beekman's library is inventoried as of 1795 in the Beekman Family Papers (hereafter cited as BFP), Box 15, F-1.

The family circle in which James received this education was, by present standards, most unusual. There were nine children who grew to maturity. James was the youngest. Of his three elder brothers, Gerard William married Mary Duyckinck, daughter of another prominent family of Dutch extraction, and became a successful merchant; but neither of the other two married. Abraham, like his father, became a doctor, but apparently never practiced except on members of the family, all of whom, whether by reason of his skill or not, lived to advanced ages. William seems to have served as manager of the family real-estate holdings and to have made very occasional ventures in trade. Of the four sisters, in addition to Cornelia who married William Walton, one married a shadowy member of the Rutgers clan, but the other three remained unmarried. Thus it was a large and closely bound household in which James Beekman grew toward maturity under the supervision not only of his aging parents but also of three maiden sisters and two batchelor brothers.

The home which young James Beekman knew was probably the same house in Van Bruggen Street which his father later passed on in his will to his unmarried daughters. This house was close to Hanover Square about which clustered the principal mercantile houses of the city, adjoined in many cases by the homes of the merchants themselves. Although as a residential quarter this area was second in fashion only to the lower Broadway area near the mansion of the governor, the Beekman home itself was not especially ostentatious. It was valued with its coach house, coach, horses, seven slaves (three of them children), furniture, plate and stores at only £1,500 in 1770.[4]

Brought up in the commercial atmosphere of Hanover Square, conscious always of the success of his father, of his uncle, Jacob Walton, and to a far higher degree of his brother-in-law, William Walton, James was understandably inclined to direct his own talents toward a career in commerce with its

[4] Esther Singleton, *Social New York under the Georges, 1714–1776* (New York: D. Appleton, 1902), 18–19; William Beekman's will and the inventory of his estate, BFP, Box 35.

promise of fortune, of adventure, and of challenge to the intelligence.

James first entered business at the age of eighteen in the fall of 1750 when a Kingston (New York) merchant, D. Wynkoop, Jr., asked him to provide "Sewing trad," Irish linen, Kersey and buckram to the value of little more than ten shillings. These were to be sent with "Bill of Parcell" (bill of lading) by Captain Abraham Vangaasbeeck to "Your frind and Humble Servant" who promised to "Pay for the Same in Short."[5]

Scarcely one month later, having presumably mastered the art of keeping store, James was off for the West Indies and new worlds to conquer. On December 14 he departed for Barbados aboard the brig *Jolly*, Captain Lawrence, which carried seventy-two barrels of pork and nearly £89 in coin (pistarines and pistoles) entrusted to James on his father's account. The intent, of course, was to dispose of these items in Barbados for whatever products seemed likely to yield the greatest return in New York. For a neophyte this was complicated business, and despite the ardent well-wishing of many relatives the fates did not deal kindly with young James. The Barbadian climate apparently suited him poorly for his first expenditures upon arriving at the island, according to his receipts, were "for flamen to lay on your Belly," for "Erbs for Bath," "To 2 Weeks Diet and lodging of your Nurse." A subsequent receipt itemized a lengthy list of medical services for which James paid £7 to "Doctor Hearne." James had arrived on January 11 and was ill from a few days after that until mid-February.

Then, having first bolstered his morale by purchasing a pair of silver shoe buckles, James set about completing his mission. Most of the pork and coin he seems to have disposed of before becoming ill. His credit of £209 he now invested in rum and sugar to take to New York. But sixteen barrels of pork remained unsold. These he stored for some time with his host before disposing of them to the same individual at slightly less than the price his father had paid for them in New York. About half of the income from this unfortunate sale was consumed by charges

[5] BFP, Box 13, F-1.

against James for board, lodging and medical care; the rest was paid in black pepper, wine, butter, and some cash. When these items, as well as the rum and sugar, were disposed of to the best advantage in New York, the net cost to William Beekman in lieu of profit for this apprentice expedition was £44. Its cost to James must have been far greater in chagrin.[6]

Unprofitable as James's voyage had been, it nevertheless laid the foundation for a future business relationship of sorts with John Wills of Barbados with whom James had boarded during his stay at that island. James wrote to Wills in June of 1751, but received no reply until a second letter reached Wills in October, informing him that Muscovado sugar was selling at 50/ in New York. Having received this news Wills speedily acknowledged both letters in the friendliest tones. He conveyed the "Compliments" of Mrs. Wills and his family, and informed James that four barrels of sugar were en route to him to be sold on Wills's account.[7]

The Beekman-Wills business relationship as revealed in this letter conformed to the general pattern of much colonial trade. James informed Wills of the New York prices for West India products; Wills promptly shipped what he had found at Barbados which seemed to offer prospect of profitable resale in New York. He sent the shipment consigned to Beekman who was to sell it as best he could and credit Wills's account for the proceeds. The letter which Wills dispatched with his shipment informed James of the prices at Barbados for New York products so that James could ship to Wills on the same terms whatever there was in the New York market which seemed likely to yield a profit in Barbados after the deduction of freight and commission charges.

There were, of course, a variety of alternatives with respect to receiving payment for a shipment one had made. One could simply build up a credit with his correspondent; one could ask for remittance in coin or bills of exchange; one could have the

[6] *Ibid.* The rum and sugar were not sold until 1753 because prices had fallen while James was away. See Bezanson *et al.*, Charts XVII and XIX.

[7] BFP, Box 13, F-1.

credit transferred to pay a local debt, or order expenditure of the credited sum for specified goods to be shipped to himself. John Wills, in this first letter to Beekman, asked to be paid as follows: two barrels of salt pork, two barrels of ship bread, six barrels of flour, a half-barrel of buttered bread, a half-barrel of milk [milk bread?], six kegs of pickled oysters, several pounds of salted beef ("Dubley Salted for fear it shou'd turn out so bad as that you seed me have from England"), and the remainder in bacon ("Let it be very Small Hams and the very best Sort all for Mrs. Wills").[8]

Wills's letter gives many indications of his awareness that James was very much a neophyte in trade. He made it clear, for example, that he considered his four barrels of sugar as a "Trifle," but that if the shipment "answers well" he would soon ship something "more worth while." His idea of what might prove more worthwhile is indicated perhaps in his next sentence which inquired, "how will Negro Boys and Girls Sell with you from Eight to Twelve years Old. I mean new Negroes." But whatever he might have hoped to send to James, he asked to be informed "by every oppurtunity" of the state of the New York market. He closed with the offer of his services and a reminder that "your speedy Returns will Increase Consinments to you from hence."[9]

If, in fact, Wills's first letter reflected apprehension arising from James's lack of experience in trade, the second letter gives evidence that such apprehension was, indeed, well founded. In August 1752, almost a year from the time he had shipped his four barrels of sugar, Wills learned from James that two of the four barrels remained unsold. Not knowing that the provisions he ordered had cost more than the proceeds of the sugar, Wills now asked that the balance of the amount due him be paid to another of his correspondents in New York, Mr. Thomas Gilbert, if no vessel could be found to carry the remittance to Barbados.[10] Wills was further discouraged to find that James

[8] *Idem.*

[9] *Idem.*

[10] William Beekman's account book actually carried the Wills account in the name of William Beekman, Jr., rather than of James. The account shows that in return for his four barrels of sugar which brought a net income to the Beekmans of £18 Wills received goods from them valued at £23. The deficit of £5 was car-

had forwarded neither an account of the sales made on Wills's behalf nor a statement of their current account. If Wills's patience had survived these tests, it was further strained by information in James's letter indicating that the price for Negroes in New York was very good. Having despaired of receiving news on this subject from James, the unfortunate Wills had shipped his young Negro slaves some months before to a much poorer market in Boston. Nevertheless he promised to "try your markett, with some Negroes etc." in the spring, but before then young Beekman's interests had turned elsewhere.

The Wills fiasco is accounted for in part by the fact that James had been absent on a second voyage to the West Indies. This time he went to Jamaica in charge of a large consignment of provisions shipped in December 1751 aboard William Walton's sloop *Mary*, William Hyer (or Heyer or sundry other spellings), Master. In Beekman's charge were 579 barrels of flour, 292 containers[11] of bread, and 4,000 staves. Of this consignment the lion's share, 339 barrels of flour, 208 containers of bread, and all the staves, belonged to William Walton & Company.[12] William Beekman had provided 168 barrels of flour and eight containers of bread while lesser amounts came from Lawrence Kortright and from Isaac and Abraham DePeyster.[13]

---

ried on William Beekman's books until 1769 when it was dropped with the notation "John Wills went off and supposed to be dead."

[11] The containers were variously and not too consistently referred to as either barrels, casks, or tierces. A barrel as later standardized was supposed to contain 31½ gallons or the following weights of solids: flour—196 pounds, pork—200 pounds, sugar—350 pounds. A cask was apparently not defined at all rigidly; a tierce was larger than a barrel, but only about two-thirds the size of a hogshead which was supposed to contain 100 to 140 gallons.

[12] William Walton & Company was then composed of James's brother-in-law, William Walton, and that gentleman's two nephews, the brothers William and Jacob Walton, who were also cousins of James. James's sister, Cornelia, had borne William Walton no children; hence they had taken under their wings the two sons, William and Jacob, of William Walton's deceased brother, Jacob, whose wife had been James Beekman's aunt, a sister of his father. See Stevens, *op. cit.*, 55–68.

[13] From Jamaica James later made remittances to Christopher Pell & Company as well as to the other merchants named. Presumably this meant Pell had consigned goods to James to be sold for his account. If so, Pell's goods came by a ship other than the *Mary*, for James's receipt for wharfage charges of that ship's cargo in Jamaica tallies closely with the total quantity of provisions listed on the bills of lading provided James by the other merchants. These items and all other records of this voyage are in BFP. Box 13, F-1.

Those who had made the smaller shipments bothered themselves little about providing instructions for James. They asked merely that he remit the proceeds in Spanish milled dollars or heavy pistoles. His father and Walton, however, were more specific. William Beekman instructed his son to sell the flour and the bread "for the most you can gett And give my Account Current Credit for the Net Proceeds of the flour and Mr. Richard Vaarck's [Varick] Account Current Credit for the Net proceeds of the Bread." His own remittance William desired to be "in good french Indigo if to be had for 4/6 or 5/ per pound, if none to be had at that price, then ship middling Sugar not exceeding 20s per Cent [hundredweight], if none to be had at that price, then ship Coffee if to be had at 6 [*torn*]." Only in the event that none of these conditions held was James to "make me Returns in heavy Spanish pistoles or Spanish milled Dollars."

Walton was even more cautious in spelling out instructions. He wanted his large quantity of provisions disposed of immediately upon arrival if that could be done "at a living price" because "a great quantity will soon follow from hence and philadelphia." However, if prices were low, Walton wanted his provisions stored until the following March, "for," as he explained it, "should the Frosty weather set in which from the season of the year we may Daily expect, it would prevent all Supplies going from philadelphia and any great quantities from from [*sic*] hence and consequently by that period of time occasion a good Demand."

In additional instructions Walton raised the memory of the unfortunate experience at Barbados by suggesting that "Should any misfortune befall you of Sickness or the like," his goods could be turned over to Henry Livingston "who has some other concerns of ours under his management." James was also instructed to rely on Livingston for advice, particularly in avoiding "Bad Debts," although because James would be considered "as a transient person" Walton felt there would be "no need of giving any Credit at all which you'll do well to avoid if possible." Remittances he wished to be made promptly,

even daring to suggest that it might be possible to make full payment in milled dollars or heavy pistoles by the return of the *Mary*.

While transacting business at Jamaica, James managed to maintain his health much better than he had at Barbados. But, although he was able to send a small remittance to Walton by the return of the *Mary*, market conditions were not good. Therefore, according to his instructions in case of a poor market, James held the largest portion of Walton's goods until the spring. He sold some of the goods of the other merchants in time for mid-February remittance to New York, but not until April did he conclude his affairs at Jamaica and sail for home. His father's account book indicates that James arrived in New York on May 16, bearing income to supplement the remittance he had forwarded in February on his father's account. With this credit increment the account was brought to balance at £192. Thus, from his father's standpoint, James had now progressed from losing money to breaking even. He may have done better for some of his other principals.

On October 5, 1752, five months after his return from Jamaica and six months before his twenty-first birthday, young James married Jane Keteltas.[14] The bride, two years younger than the bridegroom, was the daughter of another Dutch merchant family of New York. There is no indication as to what dowry was provided, but the wife brought business talents[15] and a robust constitution which was to help her bear at least ten children.[16] Among the wedding presents from James's father were four silver vessels made by Bartholomew Le Roux at a cost of £47,

[14] New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, *Collections*, Vol. I, *Marriages from 1639 to 1801 in the Reformed Dutch Church New York* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1890), 186.

[15] Jane Beekman's participation in her husband's business affairs is attested by her signature among the receipts of the peddler, Robert Gregg. See *infra*.

[16] New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, *Collections*, Vol. III, *Baptisms from 1731 to 1800 in the Reformed Dutch Church New York* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1901), *passim*. Ten children are mentioned in this volume, but an English visitor about 1794 described Mrs. Beekman as the mother of twelve "and still appearing capable of producing as many more." BFP, Vol. I (a separate manuscript volume).

twenty-four "diapers,"[17] thirty-six bottles of Madeira wine, quantities of other wines, sugar and limes, as well as payment of license and other marriage fees. The bride received a stone ring and a gold thimble from her father-in-law while James received an astounding variety of articles of dress—everything from gold "Sleve Buttons" and silver knee buckles through shirts, coats, breeches, stockings and even "4 pair Linnen drawers." Characteristically, William Beekman itemized and evaluated all these contributions; in fact he charged them all to James's account until 1767. At the end he added £48 in cash paid to James "to make him equall" to his brother Gerard in having received the equivalent of £262 with which to set up housekeeping.[18]

The James Beekmans moved fairly frequently in the first two years of their married life, but by 1754 they had settled to their apparent satisfaction in a North Ward house which they rented from John Leake for £40 per year.[19] Meanwhile they had begun to acquire various household items for which the methodical James made careful entries in his receipt book—a "Buro," a chest of drawers, silverware, a tea table and a dining table (both of mahogany), one dozen black-walnut chairs, a bedstead and one hundred pounds of feathers. To maintain this expanding household, into which the first child came in 1754 and the others usually at two year intervals thereafter, the Beekmans hired a free Negro woman, Rachel Winne, at £10 per year and in 1753 James expended an additional £55 for a fifteen-year-old Negro youth named York.[20] Two years later he bought, for £70, a Negro "wench" whom he resold after a year, however, at the same price.[21]

To support his household, James voyaged no more to the West Indies, but engaged instead in the importation of dry

[17] The word "diaper" is probably used here in the archaic sense meaning towels.

[18] BFP, Box 35. Gerard, as the eldest son, received in addition to items such as James acquired a "Troopers Saddle," a pair of "brass barrell Pistols," carbine, cutlass, a fowling piece, and a "Silver Hilted Sword."

[19] BFP, James's receipt book. Gerard's rent of £60 per year was paid from 1751 through 1754 by his father (BFP, Box 35).

[20] BFP, Box 4, F-2 and James's receipt book.

[21] BFP, ledger A, folio 21.

goods from England. His West Indian enterprises having proved richer in experience than income, James was dependent upon his father, as his brother, Gerard, had been before him, for the capital with which to develop this new line of business. When Gerard had married in 1751, his father had given him a varied stock of "Shop Goods" including dry goods, tea, teapots, combs and pewterware valued with insurance, freight, carting and other costs of importation at £1,000 (New York money). All these goods were listed in apparent conformance with the invoices received from six separate British firms.[22] With James a much simpler procedure was followed. He received bills of exchange payable in England which were valued at £888 in New York currency; the rest of the £1,000 to which he was entitled he received in cash.[23]

Relying on this capital, James dispatched orders to several British mercantile houses within three weeks after his marriage. He ordered snuff from Samuel Peach of Bristol and a variety of dry goods items[24] from Samuel & Thomas Fludyer, from William Baker and from Pomeroy & Streatfield, all London firms. A few weeks later the young bridegroom optimistically doubled his previous orders (except that to Baker) and added a new one to Thomas Maltby of London for more dry goods. By the end of November he had committed fully £1,000 to the British trade.[25]

The earliest correspondence from these British merchants

[22] BFP, Box 35.

[23] This was not all of Beekman's initial capital. He received real estate which he carried on his books at a value of £1,000, although the income it produced would indicate that it was worth far less. Furthermore he appears to have received another £1,000, largely in short-term bonds, but his records on this third capital sum are in his Journal A which has not survived. Both the real estate and the bonds probably came from his wife's family. James Beekman's two unmarried brothers, Abraham, the doctor, and William, declined to enter trade and received compensation from their father largely in real estate. Dr. William Beekman kept an accurate record of all these gifts to his children so he could be sure, as he later provided in his will, that all his children would share equally in the division of his estate.

[24] Although Beekman's letterbook for these early years has not survived, the letters and invoices from his correspondents as supplemented by his account books tell much of the story of his business life.

[25] BFP, Box 13, F-1. Henceforth when the writer is identified in the text these letters will be identified simply by the date.

reveals clearly the importance of young Beekman's family ties. William Baker, expressing his hope to "Justifye the recommendation of your father," responded to James's first letter by shipping the goods ordered, amounting to £390 sterling even though two of the three bills of exchange which James had sent in advance payment were protested.[26] Pomeroy & Streatfield answered James's request to double his previous order, if they could grant him twelve months' credit, by stating frankly, "We are under too many obligations to your Father to refuse his recommendation."[27] The other merchants to whom James wrote did not express themselves so clearly, but without exception they were also correspondents of the senior Beekman and they gave evidence of knowing who James was.

In addition to helping establish his credit, the Beekman family tie also aided James in other ways. When, for example, James forgot to order insurance on a shipment from Pomeroy & Streatfeild, those gentlemen, confident in the knowledge that "Your Father, and Brother always give us direction for insurance,"[28] corrected his oversight. Similarly, when Samuel Peach discovered that he had inadvertently omitted an item or two from a shipment to James, he added to his letter assuring James that the goods would be sent shortly the suggestion that "in case you should have a Call for them before their Arrival I have shiped of the same sorts to Mr. G. W. Beekman who I suppose will spare you a few as yours will be with you soon after."[29]

Because of his familiarity with his father's business, James was also in a position to expect, if not to demand, special considerations which the British merchants would normally have reserved for better-established correspondents. Samuel Peach, for example, wrote to James with regard to settling their account that "I am willing to make you the same allowance

[26] February 28, 1753. Sterling was then probably about 180% of the value of New York money. A protested bill was one in which the drawee denied or refused to pay the debt alleged by the drawer. It may be considered as roughly analogous to what would now be called a "rubber" check. See Harrington, 113, on the charges involved.

[27] March 7, 1753.

[28] *Idem.*

[29] March 22, 1753.

which I did in my last to your Father," and when Peach received a protest from James about a specific discount on a shipment he felt compelled to grant the additional credit, "being what you say was allowed your Father."[30]

The family tie was beneficial in still other ways. For samples of material and for knowledge of prices James could be referred to his brother or to his father. Frequently he avoided freight costs for small or fragmentary shipments when his correspondent took such liberties as did Pomeroy & Streatfeild in sending James "three paper parcels . . . packt . . . in your Fathers trunk WDB 119 per [Captain] Miller."[31] Finally, James was benefited, too, by preferential treatment in shipping goods aboard the *William and Mary*, of which his father owned one-fourth. There is no evidence as to what preference James may have received in this respect, but he ordered shipment by the *William and Mary* whenever he could and at the very least he must have enjoyed priority over strangers in getting space in times of shortage.[32] Unquestionably these advantages arising from familial associations helped James to establish himself in business, but the chief responsibility for his success or failure as a merchant lay upon his own decisions.

The principal charges on the invoices which Beekman received from England were, of course, for goods but there were other charges listed, too. The first invoice which young Beekman received from Samuel & Thomas Fludyer, for example, charged him £5 for insurance at the standard rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ on a shipment of dry goods valued at slightly over £200. As always, a lesser charge, in this instance four shillings and six pence, was added for drawing up the policy.[33] The Fludyers charged, as did some others, a small sum for "Entring Shipping etc.," but exactly what this covered is not clear.[34]

[30] Jan. 11, 1754, and July 5, 1754.

[31] March 15, 1754, and Sept. 18, 1754. Once Peach inadvertently sent James's order not only consigned but also charged to his father (Sept. 6, 1754).

[32] BFP, Box 13, *passim*.

[33] Feb. 3, 1753; BFP, Box 13, *passim*. Pomeroy & Streatfield added another charge of $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the insured value, the usual brokerage charge of a commission agent. The other merchants listed no such charge.

[34] Feb. 3, 1753.

Packing costs were usually listed on the invoices of all James's correspondents. The Fludyers, for example, charged for boards, canvas, rope, and packing. Most of the other merchants made similar charges, and even Pomeroy & Streatfeild, who made fewer charges than the others, frequently listed "A Trunk and Canvas" among the amounts on their invoices.

Occasionally invoices also listed credits for bounties or drawbacks. The former were "rewards" paid by the government for the export of certain items to the colonies.[35] Drawbacks were refunds of import duties on goods re-exported to the colonies. Their purpose was to avoid handicapping British merchants engaged in importing goods for re-export.

Although young James sent payment in advance for his first orders from England, he soon began to inquire about credit terms. Aided by business customs of the period, as well as by his family name and a favorable first impression, he quickly established credit with all his correspondents on terms which were widely observed. According to these terms, James was to make payment on his orders twelve months after they had been shipped. If he paid in advance of shipment, he was to receive a credit equal to 5% of the amount so paid. If he made a payment after the goods had been shipped, but before the expiration of twelve months, then he received a fraction of the 5% credit on his payment. The fraction was determined by the ratio of the number of months remaining in his credit term to twelve, the full length of his credit term. For payments received after the expiration of twelve months, James was to pay interest on the same basis at the rate of 5% per year. The Fludyers mentioned this formula in their first letter to James as representing standard practice with them[36] and at James's suggestion Pomeroy & Streatfeild adopted it in their dealings

[35] See W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892), 358, for an account of the "Mischievous effects of Bounties" of this type.

[36] Feb. 20, 1753. That the formula was not always observed is suggested by the fact that James later had to remind the Fludyers that he was entitled to "2 Months Discount on Silver by Bryant" and one month's discount on another silver shipment (Oct. 24, 1754). There is no indication that the British merchants pressed equally hard for interest when payments were one or two months late.

with him. Although they do not mention it, the other merchants presumably dealt with James on the same credit terms.

An exception to this general rule was William Baker, who, unlike the others, operated as a commission agent. In his first letter Baker set forth very clearly his position on the question of credit. He said then:

> As to your proposal of giving you twelve months Credit, I must observe to you that all the advantage I have by shipping goods is the Commission charged on the Invoice of 2½ per Cent which you will see is but half as much as as the bare interest of the money would come to, by inspecting the Invoice you will see that you have therein Credit given you for all the discounts and drawbacks on the several articles, which are all purchased with ready money, and most part paid for before they are shipped. Judge then whether my gain will afford Credit, if you desire me to advance for you any moderate Sum in the purchasing goods, I shall do it, as I have now done, and desire only to have interest for such advance during the time I am out of my money; to which I am sure you can have no objection; Goods may be bought and I believe are frequently for Credit, but then the price is made much more than adequate to the bare interest of the money.[37]

During the first three years of his business with the British merchants James paid his bills quite promptly, although not in the manner of many of his neighbors. Many American merchants paid for their imports from England by sending various products obtained locally or in trade with the Caribbean area. James's father made some payments in this manner, but James at this time conducted his business with England entirely on a cash as opposed to a "bookkeeping barter" basis. At the conclusion of his third year in the British trade, James had paid his correspondents a total of approximately £2,750 in sterling,[38] or slightly under £5,000 in New York currency. Of this sum more than one third had been paid in silver, usually

[37] Feb. 28, 1753. Baker and Beekman's other correspondents are identified in more detail in Chapter XII which deals with the war period during which many of them held prominent positions. The advance to Beekman which Baker mentions here resulted from his shipping the goods Beekman had ordered despite the fact that Beekman's bills of exchange had not been paid (see page 346).

[38] For comparison it would be well to remember that his father had sent £11,900 in sterling to England in the two years, 1749–50 (Chapter X).

Spanish milled dollars, and the balance of £1,634 sterling in bills of exchange, drawn usually by other New York merchants or West Indians on their English correspondents. During the same time James actually received from these merchants goods valued at £4,865, sterling, or about £8,750 in New York currency. The disparity of over £2,000 sterling between what James had received and what he had paid for is accounted for almost entirely by imports subsequent to March 1, 1755, for which, according to the twelve-month credit rule, payment was not yet due at the time when our accounting period closes, January 1, 1756. That this record was appreciated by James's correspondents is evident in the comment of Pomeroy & Streatfeild, with whom he did almost as much business as with all his other correspondents combined, that "the Punctuality of Your payments hath the justest claim to the lowest prices."[39]

All was not sweetness and light, however, between James and his correspondents. Pomeroy & Streatfeild tried James's patience repeatedly by modifying his orders. Replying to his second letter which requested that his original order be doubled, Pomeroy & Streatfeild informed James that calico was so scarce that they had had to reduce his order rather than double it and that "Guyney stuffs being too dear for your market are omitted."[40] They made other modifications freely in that shipment and in those which followed, compelling James at last to instruct them quite bluntly to send his goods "conformable" to his orders.[41] In their reply, Pomeroy & Streatfeild pointed out that "our reputation as well as interest is concernd to send you the goods as conformable to Your orders as possible, but the alteration of the Prices in our East India sales, and alteration in Publick affairs affects our goods, that renders it impracticable to conform to your prices."[42]

The scarcity of printed calicos, which were in such short supply when James first ordered goods from England, continued to provide a sore spot in his business relationship with Pomeroy & Streatfeild. The situation had improved con-

[39] July 31, 1755.
[40] March 7, 1753.
[41] July 31, 1755.
[42] *Idem.*

siderably by late 1755, but then the frustrated merchants wrote to Beekman of "a providential disapointment [which] hath rendered us incapable of executing your whole quantity." This intervention of the Deity took the form of "a dreadful fire that happened at one of our printers . . . where we had one thousand peices of callicoes. . . . As the workshops are burnt down, the printer is incapable of finishing them at present, and we are fearful that many are destroyed by the flames; instead of 40 callicoes two colours and blue, have sent only 27 some of which are ellwide and some are yardwide. . . ."[43] James's orders for other patterns of calico were halved. Nevertheless, while continuing to modify his orders freely, Pomeroy & Streatfeild continued also to receive the lion's share of Beekman's business.

With the other correspondents there were difficulties no less serious, although fortunately more transitory. Explaining a delay in shipment, Thomas Maltby complained about a captain who had promised to take goods consigned to James, but "The day before we were to Ship 'em," said Maltby, the captain "came and said he was full and would not take 'em, which we think was useing us very ill."[44] James himself got into trouble when he returned as "not agreable" to the New York market some silver ribbons shipped him by William Baker. Observing that the ribbons had been made "on a new pattern and the lomb [loom] set on purpose for them" and furthermore that they were "exact to your order," Baker refused to credit Beekman for their cost, although he did promise "to make the most I can of them for your account," presumably by selling them at auction.[45] Another disagreement arose with Samuel Peach of Bristol over some pins which he sent James, and charged him for, simply "to fill up the Case and not out of choice." Peach agreed to "allow 'em at the Price you have them at from London," but he hoped James would be able to compare the weight of the London and the Bristol pins.[46] The Fludyers in one of their early letters to James promised to credit him for items which were missing when their shipment arrived in

[43] Oct. 3, 1755.
[44] April 7, 1753.
[45] Aug. 10, 1753.
[46] Aug. 14, 1753.

New York and defended in some detail the quality of goods they had shipped. They asserted, however, with respect to some "Silk Twist etc." that "We are no way pledges of such Articles, being concerned only in the different Branches of Woolen Manufactorys, Alapines, Shaggs etc., in all which We can with Confidence say, You shall ever find that no persons have it more in their Power or Inclination to pay a greater Regard to your Interest."[47] Having thus in his first year of business impressed his alertness upon his correspondents, James found fewer occasions for complaint in the years that followed.

Numerous as were the problems of trans-oceanic commercial relations, they did not exhaust the difficulties which faced the colonial merchant. He had to anticipate demand for goods in his trading area and, when they arrived, to sell his goods safely and profitably in competition with other merchants. To guide himself in the performance of these tasks and in particular to keep a clear picture of the profitability and the rate of turnover for each commodity he imported, James kept very detailed records. He numbered his invoices consecutively as they came in from England and allocated one folio (two opposing pages) in his ledger to each. On the right hand page he set up vertical columns for each commodity which was included in the invoice. Whenever he made a sale, either for cash or for credit, he entered in his journal not only the amount of a particular item sold, the amount paid for it, and, for credit sales, the name of the purchaser (with a cross reference to the purchaser's account in the ledger), but also a cross reference to the invoice record in his ledger. There he recorded the name of the purchaser, unless the sale was made for cash, the quantity of the item or items sold from that invoice, and the amount charged. He continued in this manner to list each sale of goods from a particular invoice until all the goods had all been sold, even though in many cases this took years. Then he added up his income from the sales to balance against the costs related to that invoice which he had noted meanwhile on the left side of the folio.

[47] Sept. 14, 1753.

2842